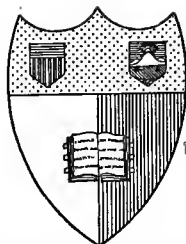


THE FLIGHT OF ICARUS



C. TENNYSON NEELY, PUBLISHER, NEW YORK & LONDON

PS
2719
R35F6



Cornell University Library

Ithaca, New York

LIBRARY OF

LEWIS BINGLEY WYNNE

A.B., A.M., COLUMBIAN COLLEGE, '71, '73

WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE GIFT OF

MRS. MARY A. WYNNE

AND

JOHN H. WYNNE

CORNELL '98

1922

Cornell University Library
PS 2719.R35F6

The flight of Icarus;an Idyl of Printing



3 1924 022 160 521

olin



Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

THE FLIGHT OF ICARUS

An Idyl of Printing-House Square.

BY
JAY ROBIN.

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
As to be hated needs but to be seen ;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."



F. TENNYSON NEELY,
PUBLISHER,
LONDON. NEW YORK.

Copyright, 1898,
by
F. TENNYSON NEELY,
in
United States
and
Great Britain.

All Rights Reserved.

5669B

PREFACE.

“Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable.”

THESE words, quoted by poor De Maupassant in the course of his admirable introduction to “Pierre and Jean,” contain the only defense the author can offer to the charge that the story told in the following pages is, perhaps, slightly illogical in some of its details.

With all due deference to those who claim that a novel should be a strictly logical exposition of the events of life, the author begs to submit the story told herein, contenting himself with the fact that the most illogical portions of the narrative are those which he has copied from life!

Human actions are not amenable to the laws of logic.

You cannot forecast human events either by deduction or induction.

In the annals of human effort we find the enthusiastic idealist of to-day the low “political-

tro'' of to-morrow. The all-conquering Maro Antony lays the destiny of the world at the feet of Cleopatra. Mirabeau not only gives his heart—but literally breaks it—for his Queen. And in both cases, what might not other circumstances, other environments have done for the history of the human family!

Of the countless number of plans conceived by a man in a lifetime, how many are realized? The evolution of a plan or scheme is the exemplification of subjectivity—as for the actual eventuality—that is the result of surroundings, of extraneous influences—how often of chance!

To attempt to actually particularize individuality is either folly or an assumption of the most flagrant kind. When we consider the infinity of character—of self—when we take the merest glance at the incomprehensibly various nature of personality, it seems little short of an affront to the whole race for any member of it to attempt to indicate a certain line of action for a certain "character."

There is nothing fixed or immutable in human nature. This must be accepted as a basic fact. The most wicked of men are apt

to be the authors of the most benign acts, and the most noble may—indeed, do—participate in the most wicked deeds (not to speak of thoughts). Man is always in the process of evolution—and in blindly pursuing an unknown path, what individual can choose his steps or avoid the precipices?

It may be urged that the thoughts which the author has attempted to convey in this volume have already found expression in more artistic plots, in better words, in more convincing argument. He can only reply that, as the fact of other men having breathed before him does not discourage his consuming his share of the free air, so he, too, perforce, adds his expression of thoughts, appreciating that many may have said the same thing before, and may have said it more aptly, but still holding to the one main claim that no one before could possibly have had the same particular attributive thought, as he here puts it into form and expression.

Finally, the author sincerely trusts that the fugitive underlying thoughts embodied in this volume may be recognizable through the veneer of the story. If its contents

shall cause one man, at least, to view less harshly the acts of his neighbor—if it shall cause one judge of his brother to “judge not”—if it shall cause one uncompromising denouncer to abate his vehemence, or if it shall instill in the crusty breast of one moral censor the sentiment of human kindliness—if it shall lead him to recognize the frailty of human resolutions, the weakness of human inhibition and the abject slavery of man to circumstance—he will count his labors well rewarded.

JAY ROBIN.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
Saint Anthony.....	9
CHAPTER II.	
Digging a Pit.....	18
CHAPTER III.	
The Snake.....	29
CHAPTER IV.	
A Glimpse of Paradise.....	41
CHAPTER V.	
"He's Black!".....	50
CHAPTER VI.	
First Blood.....	57
CHAPTER VII.	
A Newcomer.....	71
CHAPTER VIII.	
Love.....	85
CHAPTER IX.	
Sweet Alice.....	94
CHAPTER X.	
A Kiss at Auction.....	106
CHAPTER XI.	
A Flame Kindled.....	120

	PAGE
CHAPTER XII.	
Check !.....	132
CHAPTER XIII.	
An Assignment.....	139
CHAPTER XIV.	
"She's a Regular Witch !".....	145
CHAPTER XV.	
Bacchus and Terpsichore.....	150
CHAPTER XVI.	
A Victim of Circumstances.....	159
CHAPTER XVII.	
The Fleeting Vision	166
CHAPTER XVIII.	
"My Pure, Innocent Dove."	170
CHAPTER XIX.	
Two Friends.....	176
CHAPTER XX.	
The Temptation.....	181
CHAPTER XXI.	
The Reaction.....	190
CHAPTER XXII.	
A Gentleman and a Man.....	193
CHAPTER XXIII.	
The Morning After.....	197
CHAPTER XXIV.	
Found !.....	203
CHAPTER XXV.	
"Sophie Duval !".....	208

CONTENTS.

ix

	PAGE
CHAPTER XXVI.	
The Old, Old Story	216
CHAPTER XXVII.	
At the French Ball.....	221
CHAPTER XXVIII.	
"Do You Think I Ought to Marry Him?".....	230
CHAPTER XXIX.	
A Question of Principle.....	238
CHAPTER XXX.	
"Why are Women Bad?".....	245
CHAPTER XXXI.	
A Wedding.....	251
CHAPTER XXXII.	
Breach of Promise.....	258
CHAPTER XXXIII.	
The Verdict.....	267
CHAPTER XXXIV.	
Morphine.....	275
CHAPTER XXXV.	
"Some Day You Will Know.".....	279
CHAPTER XXXVI.	
"Do Not Forget Me.".....	288
CHAPTER XXXVII.	
Better Late than Never.....	299
CHAPTER XXXVIII.	
The World Is Mine!.....	306
CHAPTER XXXIX.	
The Cup and the Lip.....	312

CHAPTER XL.	PAGE
"Before the Clock Strikes Twelve.".....	817
CHAPTER XLI.	
The Last Assignment.....	826
CHAPTER XLII.	
At Midnight.....	831
CHAPTER XLIII.	
A Tenderloin Raid.....	843
CHAPTER XLIV.	
"Elaine!".....	849
CHAPTER XLV.	
An Interrupted Wedding.....	855
CHAPTER XLVI.	
The Known and the Unknown.....	861

THE FLIGHT OF ICARUS.

CHAPTER I.

SAINT ANTHONY.

DUFFIT leaned back in his chair and sneered.

"A second Saint Anthony, eh?" he drawled.

"That's the chap as stood up agin all them livin' picters, ain't it? Well, you're about right. That's him. I never did see sech a chap, s'help me never! Allers as p'lite as a— a deacon an' as see-rous as a cigar-store Injun. Never no offense, ye know, but allers makes a feller feel 's if he'd put his foot in it fer sure."

"Oh, I know the run. They're deep, they are. You can never tell what they're up to. I don't like 'em, either. They always seem to me to be posing around, expecting to be worshiped."

"I dunno. He's different, he is. Dey ain't a squarer chap on earth than this same John Revere, but I kain't make 'im out an' there's an end to't. Look here, what d'ye

think of a chap as walks along Fourteent' Street wid ye as pleasant as a house a-fire an' talks away t'irteen t' th' dozen, but when ye hails a couple of dames ye knows, cuts clear an' steers fer the 'L' as fast as his walkers kin carry 'im?"

"Why, I think he's either a hypocrite, or——"

"Well, never mind what ye think," O'Tear interrupted, "here's the chap now, an' ye'll have a chance t' find out fer yerself," and rising from his chair, he called out:

"Hey, Revere, come over here!"

"Just a moment," came the reply, "wait till I've reported at the desk."

"There he goes," O'Tear said to his friend, looking after the tall, well-formed young man admiringly, "as true blue as ever wuz. No nonsense till he's reported to th' old man; then a shake o' them brown hair o' his'n an he's at yer services, John Revere, Esquire, late o' th' wild and woolly West, now special reporter on this great an' glee-orious organ o' the people."

"How did he get here?" Duffit asked, glancing disdainfully at the sturdy stranger.

"Oh, old man Timbers discovered 'im. He

wuz sent out one day on a speshul story an' 'is copy wuz bang-up. So he wuz put on reg'lar."

"Well, here he comes now. I hope he deserves all your encomiums."

"What's them?"

"Why, your praises."

"O, I wuzn't sure. Ye'll find 'im all right, I guess," O'Tear concluded, as the subject of their conversation approached the duo, and turning toward the young man: "Say, Revere," he said, "I want t' introjuce ye t' me partic'ler frien', Mister Thomas Duffit."

The usual conventionalities followed the introduction, but somehow or other the conversation, which was generally lively where John Revere was around, languished woefully on this occasion. All three, in fact, hailed with relief the call from the desk for Revere, and the young man hurried off again.

"What d'ye think uv 'im?" O'Tear asked, as soon as Revere was out of earshot.

"Humph," Duffit grunted, "I wouldn't trust that fellow an inch further than my eyes could see him."

"Ye don't cotton t' 'im, then?"

"Cotton to him? Not by a d—d sight."

"Well, old man, there's where ye makes a glee-orious mistake. Just ye wait till he goes out on 'signment an' see what Timbers has to say about 'im."

A few minutes later the two friends were leaning over Timbers' desk.

"Say, Timbers," O'Tear suggested, "I want ye t' tell Duffit what ye think o' that chap Revere. Duffit has jest come down to th' office, fust time this week, an' ain't seen yer new star yet."

Timbers leaned back and chuckled. He was one of those dried-up specimens of humanity one so often meets in the editorial sanctums of the metropolitan press. He had started in the business as a printer's devil, and having, one happy day, graduated to the reportorial table, proceeded to distinguish himself in various efforts at news-getting. To cap the climax, he had once published a novel which had been exhibited on the booksellers' stalls for three whole weeks, and he was now, therefore, counted one of the bright particular stars of the editorial constellation, being accredited with the rather doubtful titles of "veteran" and "progressive old schooler." It was his delight

to be looked upon as the discoverer of geniuses in the ranks of the profession; the only drawback to that laudable ambition being the fact that his enthusiasm was as ephemeral as it was torrid. Hence, one of his discoveries had hardly had time to accustom himself to his stellar position, before he was ignominiously forsaken for some other, newer attraction. At the moment, his faith in John Revere was just developing, and he was, consequently, in the mood for lauding that young man away up to the skies. Himself a man of very little moral sensitiveness, however, he could not help condemning the apparently puritanical scruples of his *protégé*, and was as ready to exploit them for his auditors' edification as he was to resent any imputation against his new acquisition's extraordinary newspaper abilities.

"Queer chap, Revere, isn't he?" Timbers sententiously replied, shuffling the papers on his desk—a mannerism of his, which was quite effective in convincing undesirable visitors that he was a very busy man indeed.

"Crank, I should say," Duffit answered. "Does he know anything?"

"Know anything?" Timbers exclaimed, "I

should say he does! Great guns, man, do you know what you're talking about? That man knows more than half the rest of the staff put together! Do you suppose I'd have put him where he is now if he didn't know anything? Holy cat, man, what do you take me for "

O'Tear nudged Duffit.

"Ye've done it now," he whispered.

Duffit attempted to conciliate the irate chief.

"I did not mean to impute, you know"—he began.

"Impute nothing! I'll bet eight cents to a broken peanut that he can beat you four times over, editing your society stuff, and never turn a hair."

The statement was too emphatic to be controverted, and Duffit swallowed it down with the best grace he could muster. His silence mollified the "old man," and the war cloud passed as quickly as it had risen.

"Say, Timbers, we wuz jest talkin' about his Saint—Saint—what's 'is name, now?" O'Tear said, turning to Duffit for help.

"Saint Anthony," Duffit prompted.

"That's the chap! We wuz talkin' about 'is Saint Anthony ways, ye know."

"Oh," Timbers replied, his face expanding in a broad grin, "that's different. Geewhills, I never did see such a crank on women. I swear, I don't know what to make of him. Send him out on a story, and there is not a virago but will open her heart and unburden her whole soul to him; but try to steer him into a quiet little place, you know, for an evening, and Lord! he's got an engagement, or isn't feeling well, or something. Queerest thing on earth!"

"That's it," O'Tear supplemented. "Ain't got no more use fer a goil than a priest."

Duffit curled his lip.

"Probably for the same reason," he said.

"How's that?" O'Tear asked.

"Too many in reserve."

Timbers flushed.

"Look here, Duffit," he exclaimed, "no talk about the church, if you please. I am a Catholic myself, although I haven't been to mass in ten years, and I will not listen to any such——"

"Oh, very well, I take it all back." Duffit hastened to apologize.

"There ye two go, like a couple uv dogs in

a pit," O'Tear jokingly commented. "Honest Injun, though, I don't b'lieve the man has spoken fourteen words more'n he ought t' a goil since he's ben in New York."

"And I'll bet you a hundred that the man would jump at the first girl that would crook a finger at him," Duffit answered.

O'Tear slapped his knee.

"Done!" he exclaimed. "You show me a goil what kin bring 'im down within a month, an' the money's your'n."

"And I'll take a hundred dollars' worth of that myself," Timbers put in, his sporting blood asserting itself on the instant.

"I'll go you," Duffit answered. "Even money that your paragon worships at the shrine of one of the town's Venuses within a month. But understand, no warning to Revere; no working against me."

"No warning; no working against," the two echoed.

Ten minutes later Duffit was busily engaged in conversation with a sallow-featured, black-haired and low-browed young aspirant for journalistic honors, who was known to the

staff by the various nicknames of "Parrot," "Cold Brass," and other like terms of endearment.

"Understand, Perry, you must get out of him all you can of his past and present. Become his friend, and if you possibly can, his confidant. Spare no pains. I am determined to show him up and it will pay you to help me."

"Trust me," Perry answered. "I am sick of hearing Revere here and Revere there. There isn't a man on the staff who has any chance with him in the office. Leave it all to me."

CHAPTER II.

DIGGING A PIT.

ALL unconscious of the interest which his short stay in the office had aroused, Revere quickly descended the steps of the Twenty-eighth Street "L" station, and struck across into the heart of the Tenderloin district. He was not particularly eager to execute the work he had in hand. In fact, he was rather annoyed at the frequency with which Timbers had lately sent him out, day after day, on Tenderloin assignments. But duty was duty, and although he would have preferred doing almost anything else in the world, no one could ever complain about the thoroughness of his investigations or the quality of his "copy."

It had been a queer plunge for him—from the quiet of his Western village home into the hurry and bustle of never-sleeping New York. Born a dreamer, he was at the same time en-

dowed by Nature with all the attributes of perfect manhood. Consequently, he found but little sympathy or appreciation in the crowd of *blasé* men with whom he was forced into daily association. He could take no part in their peculiar amusements and recreations, and was therefore looked upon by some as a fool, by others as a hypocrite, and by still others as a knave.

Revere's assignment that day took him to a flat house on West Twenty-eighth Street, then well known both to the police and the sporting fraternity as a nest wherein certain members of the *jeunesse dorée* found shelter for their *sub-rosa* amours. There had been many rumors of an impending revival of police activity in the district, and it was Revere's duty to write up an "*exposé*" of the place, which his paper was to expand upon at a sacrifice of much space, and claim credit for as a Social Reform sheet.

Revere found no trouble in effecting an entrance into the house, and in the usual guise of a simple countryman was soon circulating among the different flats, spending some money on various "refreshments," and storing up a

goodly amount of information. As he was walking along one of the halls, escorted by two sirens, he encountered another man coming from the opposite direction. This individual, who gave one the impression of an animated clothing-house wax-figure—so spruce was his appearance—stopped short when he saw Revere and grasped the balustrade for support, while his ruddy countenance turned, all of a sudden, to the color of a freshly-laundered sheet.

“Pardon me,” he gasped out, “may I speak to you a moment?”

Revere halted, hesitated a moment, and then followed him a few steps to the side.

“You are a newspaper man?” the stranger blurted out.

Revere bit his lip in vexation. .

“Well, what then?” he asked.

“For God’s sake, tell me the truth. Are you here to write this place up?”

“Why?”

“Good heavens, man, you simply must not! Look here, what will you take——”

Revere’s jaw closed with a snap. The stranger perceived that he had blundered.

“I’ll do anything under the sun to stop

this," he said. "I'll give you information enough about other places to more than pay up; but I can't have this place pulled."

Revere looked doubtful.

"I'll keep my word all right enough," the young man went on, seeing his advantage. "You are under Timbers, are you not?"

Revere nodded.

"I thought I had seen you there. Well, you come and telephone down to him and see what he says. Tell him that Mr. Armstrong has promised you valuable information in return for a let-up on this place. Tell him to ask Mr. Duffit about me."

It took but a few minutes for Timbers to grasp the import of Revere's message over the wire. After a hasty consultation with Duffit, he ordered Revere to come back to the office with Armstrong.

"Thank heaven," the latter individual exclaimed with a sigh of relief as he heard Timbers' decision. "It would have killed her if the house had been raided."

Revere said nothing and the two proceeded downtown in silence.

At the office Timbers received them with a

great show of jubilation. It was no mean feat to have hit that leader of the fast coterie—Alfred Armstrong—in a weak spot.

“Aha, Mr. Armstrong, so we have you in our drag-net, have we?” he exclaimed, slapping the young man on the shoulder. “Well, what can you do for us in return for our maganimous self-sacrifice?”

“Anything I can do is at your command,” the victim stiffly replied.

“All right, all right,” Timbers genially exclaimed. “We’ll put you in the hands of your friend Mr. Duffit.”

Armstrong’s face brightened.

“Thank you,” he said. “I appreciate your courtesy.”

Armstrong soon convinced Duffit that he had sufficient information to more than compensate for that which Revere had gained in the West Twenty-eighth Street house, and after Duffit had reported to his chief to that effect the two friends strolled out on Broadway. For a few minutes neither spoke. Then Duffit broke the silence.

“By the way,” said he, “what do you think of that chap Revere?”

"The fellow who was up to my place? Oh, I don't know; he's an ordinary enough chap, I suppose. Confoundedly straight, though, I should judge. Tried to sugar him, but it was no go. How does he stand with the crowd?"

"Pretty poorly, I may assure you. You see, the chap poses as a sort of '*Nemo me impune lacessit*' angel around the office. There is not a man who has ever seen him around town except on business, and you couldn't draw him into a joint of any sort with a yoke of oxen."

"Phew! He seemed thick enough with the girls this afternoon."

"That's his way. When he's out on the hustle there is not a wench but opens up heart and soul and receives him like the old Harry himself. After he gets through his work, however, he will no more look at the fairies than jump off the Park Row dome. He puts on the air of having no earthly use for them, and the fellows up at the office are just broken up about him."

Armstrong smiled.

"He must be a queer customer," he remarked, "if he can thus affect a crowd of news-

paper men. I wish, now, I had paid closer attention to him. You don't like the man, do you?"

"Like him? No, not I; and what's more, I don't believe in all this assumed saintliness of his, either. I'll tell you what I think—I believe he is a fraud. I've laid money on it with Timbers and O'Tear, and I'll make him crawl to some one of our demi-monde within a month. You wait and see if I don't. I have not devised any plan as yet, but I will, and when I do, it will be all day with my fine fellow's angelic pretensions."

"H'm, what do you think you'll do?"

"Oh, I'll put up some job. By Jove, here's an idea! What do you say to helping me? There'll be a lot of sport in it."

Armstrong's chubby face fairly beamed.

"I'm with you, old man!" he exclaimed, slapping Duffit on the back, "the cad came pretty near getting me into the dickens of a hole, and I don't mind getting even. How do you propose to arrange it?"

"I'll tell you how we can do it. Suppose, now, we fix up a fine little supper uptown. Then we invite his angelic highness, and have

some nice little girl lay for him. Presto, there's the whole affair! I'll bet that before he's drunk his second glass he'll be ready to fall at the fair one's feet and worship. There's nothing so contagious as example, you know, and what with that and a few drops of the real old stuff in his glass—he'll come around mighty soon, I think."

"Good idea, by Jove!" Armstrong cried. "I'll bring around Mattie and Rosie myself. You know them, don't you? They're corkers, both of them. Look as innocent as new-born babes, and are as full of the devil as two imps."

"They'll do," answered Duffit, "but say, old man, whom will we have for our bright particular star, the one that's to do the trick, you know? One of the ordinary run won't do, at all. Can't you suggest some one out of the rabble?"

Armstrong looked wise for a moment. "I don't know," he drawled, "most of them are the same——"

"I have it!" Duffit exclaimed. "Just the one! Look here, Armstrong, are you in this in earnest?"

"Of course."

"Well, then, how would you like to lend us your *belle amie* for the night?"

Armstrong frowned.

"Lil, you mean?"

"Yes, she'd do capitally."

"Well, you see, old fellow, I'm mighty fond of Lil, and I'm keeping her for myself. She's one in ten thousand, I assure you, although she has the devil of a temper. But there is not a siren that can look more like a saint than she, when she wants to, and I tell you——"

"That's just it!" Duffit impatiently exclaimed. "She's just the sort to catch that fellow. He's deep, and so, as far as I can make it out, is she, and it would be a case of diamond cut diamond."

"Ye—es, I suppose so," Armstrong agreed, "but still I don't know. She's been pretty peevish of late, and I can't, for the life of me, make her out. She hardly goes out at all, wears a heavy veil, and never goes to any of the regular balls or dances, don't you know. Always either a masquerade affair or quiet theater party. I really don't know what's

come over her. Three or four months ago there was not a gayer bit of a woman in the city. George! She led me the very devil of a dance! Balls, parties, receptions and hops till I thought I would not have a pair of legs left to stand upon. But now—shucks! if ever a girl was staid and prim, she is. In the house all day and evening, excepting an occasional stroll in the park, and then, all alone. Doesn't give a d—n for company, and I verily believe, hardly bears the sight of me—even me!"

Duffit laughed at the air of injured pride which Armstrong assumed.

"So you are growing tired of her, eh?" he quizzed.

"Tired?" Armstrong exclaimed with more than ordinary vehemence, his weak attempt at a mustache fairly bristling, "not by a long shot! Why, my dear boy, I adore her more than ever! I simply worship her! B' George, I never knew how much I could love until now. Why, my dear fellow, if she didn't display such a vixenish temper so often and make me feel small enough to creep through a needle-hole, I verily believe I would come to the point of—of——"

"Marrying her?" Duffit sneered.

Armstrong nodded.

"Pretty near it, anyway," he muttered in a low tone.

Duffit laughed.

"Well, well, old fellow, we'll try to get along without your vixenish beauty. I'll look around for some one else's darling. But why don't you give us a chance to meet this paragon of yours? Say a supper party of a dozen jolly souls or so. I might induce his angelic highness to come along."

"Well, I'll try it, but I'm doubtful."

"All right; see you uptown later. I'll probably arrange all the particulars of the supper party to-day. Make arrangements with whoever you wish to bring along, and remember—the more of the fair sex the better."

"Trust me."

CHAPTER III.

THE SNAKE.

PERCY PERRY, Esquire, was a man who never allowed the grass to grow under his feet. Having undertaken the task of ingratiating himself with Revere, he set about his mission like the systematic worker that he was. Accordingly, when Revere came down to the office the next day, he found himself continually stumbling over some little kindness of Mr. Perry's.

Genial Mr. Perry! Nothing seemed too troublesome for him. Was Mr. Revere well supplied with copy paper? Yes? Too bad. He had some extra fine supplies on hand, and if Mr. Revere would only deign—He would? How very kind of Mr. Revere! By the way, was Mr. Revere aware of the new issue of guide books? No? Then he was very fortunate, indeed, in having the pleasure of presenting Mr.

Revere with his copy. He really had no use for it, and Mr. Revere, as a stranger, would, doubtless, find it of great value in making his way about the obscure parts of the city. And was Mr. Revere aware of the beauties of this special make of lead pencil? Very soft, he could assure him, and quite to be depended upon. Mr. Revere would accept a half-dozen of them? No? But really, he would feel so happy—if Mr. Revere only would—would not Mr. Revere alter his decision? Yes? Delighted! Delighted!

John Revere was at a loss. He could not make this man out. Surrounded as he was, on all sides, by hard, unsympathetic, inquisitive faces, he could but feel that this man of self-sacrificing words and ways was quite an exception to the run of the newspaper fraternity. What aim could he have? None, beyond question. Revere was a man of neither prominence nor influence. He must be disinterested. Was all this display of good feeling, then, simply the result of pure kind-heartedness? If this was the case, Revere felt he could congratulate himself on having discovered a man rare among thousands.

Revere could do no less than reciprocate the obliging Perry's affability. The more he talked to the model young philanthropist, the greater grew his wonder.

Would Mr. Revere favor him with his company at dinner? Did not Mr. Revere feel lonesome, being all alone in the city? Mr. Revere was all alone in the country, too? And in the world, as well? How sad! He could sympathize with Mr. Revere, although he himself was endowed with a perfect horde of relatives.

Would Mr. Revere favor him with his company at his house some day in the near future? His sisters were quite musical; he was sure they would entertain Mr. Revere. And he himself would be pleased to engage in any game which Mr. Revere liked. Mr. Revere did not play cards? Heh-heh-he-h! then Mr. Revere did not know the joys of poker! But, Mr. Revere played chess? Ah! There it was! Mr. Perry would not rest until he had mastered the royal game. He knew its rudiments only, for it was such a hard game, took so much brain power, and when one had not much more than a sufficiency for general

uses—heh-heh-heh! Mr. Revere saw the joke? Mr. Perry always did think that the right kind of jokes were those which turned on the one who cracked them. By the bye, did Mr. Revere enjoy the opera? Yes? how very fortunate, Mr. Perry had free *entrée* to the Metropolitan Opera House (great thing—a “pull!”), and if Mr. Revere would only favor him with his company? Mr. Revere would be delighted? How fortunate! Mr. Perry felt the greatest pleasure in giving pleasure to others.

When the two met at dinner that evening, Revere was simply charmed. Surely, the world had never seen such a large-hearted man. Who could thenceforth assert that there was anything in the study of the human physiognomy? What if Percy Perry's face was small and weazened and sallow; what if his hair was bristly; what if his hands were claw-like, and his eyes mean, and shifty, and his motions cat-like and his voice harsh and piping? Surely, that was a big, warm heart which beat within that ill-favored body, and that was a highly sensitive and well-intentioned mind which rested behind that low, knobby forehead.

Exceptional Mr. Perry! No man ever exerted himself so conscientiously or so successfully to make himself agreeable. The impersonation growing upon him, he really felt himself what he pretended to be; and it is little to be doubted that, had conscience, which was fortunately an unknown quality in his constitution, attempted to suggest to him the farcical view of his impersonation, he would have arisen in his honest indignation and repudiated its arraignment with the full conviction of his own righteousness!

Prompted, perhaps, by curiosity, or by that instinct which sometimes demonstrates to our unwilling selves the superiority of nature over all our artificial acquirements, Revere interrupted Mr. Perry's flow of language long enough to ask him the cause of his sudden interest in one who was really a complete stranger.

"My dear Revere," Perry answered, graciously extending his cigar-case to Revere and pressing him to retain several of the perfectos as a slight favor to himself. "My dear Mr. Revere, I wish you could appreciate what it is for a man of sensibilities to be enabled to

come in contract with a man so much to his own heart as you are to mine. No, no, do not smile, Mr. Revere; I may assure you that I speak from my very soul. In this profession of ours, where one encounters so much jealousy and antagonism, it feels like striking an oasis after many days' travel in a desert to come upon a man who talks and thinks and feels like a human being."

"You are unjust to our colleagues," Revere remonstrated.

"Allow me," Perry replied, filling Revere's glass, "allow me, who have had more experience with our people than you—allow me, I say, to contradict you. Wait until you have seen more of us, and then you will be able to judge better," and having rounded off this little piece of wisdom, Mr. Perry leaned back and smiled benignly.

"If, then," Revere answered, "you think that I draw conclusions upon too slight acquaintance, are you not guilty of the same sin?"

"Heh-heh-heh-heh-heh-heh!" Mr. Perry cackled, "well put, extremely well put! But you can't catch me there, Mr. Revere, you

can't catch me there! The fact of the matter is that you come among us as one, and we all look at you and study you. To you, we are a multitude, and you haven't yet had time to know one of us intimately."

"There's Mr. O'Tear," Revere began.

"Eh, yes. O'Tear is a queer fellow, to be sure. Quite out of the ordinary, I may assure you. Seems to be a mystery about him, don't you know. To see him and hear him, you'd think he was low—quite low; but he isn't. Some of the fellows say he was a swell once—quite a swell. Eh, there are many stories about him. Sometimes, you know, he'll talk English like Stevenson's books—that's when he's in earnest, you know. Queer character, Mr. O'Tear."

"Ah, yes," Revere mused, "life is queer, in general."

"You, too, have cause to say so?" Perry exclaimed, grasping the opportunity thus offered. "I shouldn't think there would be anything in your life, simple as I understand it to have been, to make you look upon it as in any way a queer article."

Revere smiled at the apparent *naïveté*.

"My dear sir," he answered, "the mere fact that I come from the more or less bucolic regions of the trans-Mississippi must not prejudice you against my ability to judge of life, to some little extent, at least."

"You are a real Westerner, then?" Perry inquired, as if the fact were quite a new one to him.

"Yes; my birthplace, and until lately, residence, is a little town far in the land of the setting sun. It may be a queer confession to make for one who claims allegiance to a metropolitan newspaper, yet I had hardly seen anything of the outside world before I came to New York."

Perry now saw that he had Revere started, and played his cards like the veteran gambler that he was.

"Impossible!" he answered. "Surely, no man who has not had a personal experience with the bitters as well as with the sweets of life could write in such a style as you do or, above all, hold such—such—such——"

"Such what?" Revere asked, seeing his embarrassment.

"Why, such views of life in general and

morals, don't you know, and their application, in particular."

Revere smiled.

"Alas!" he replied; "I see that you join with the others in condemning my opinions and ideas. Well, small blame to you. I suppose that you, who have lived in the active world so long, have much more practical views of life than I have, and yet——"

Revere paused and hesitated, but Perry's rapt expression induced him to continue.

"And yet," he went on, "I would much rather find myself without life than without those ideas which I hold so sacred."

Had Perry now asked Revere to tell him in detail what his opinions were, he would never have heard them. Like the highly bred horse, which answers most readily the slightest indication of its rider's will, as expressed by the almost imperceptible twitch of the rein or pressure of the heel, but if urged with the lash, breaks away and never more holds to the true path, so this free, noble soul, hungering for human sympathy and appreciation—although it would have resented the slightest exhibition of goading—being left entirely to

its own course, gradually unrolled itself and exposed to the irreverent gaze the deepest impulses of its being.

"With all that," Revere continued, after a slight pause, "I must admit that my views are such as must naturally, I suppose, be repudiated by humanity at large as both impracticable and meretricious."

"Surely not," Perry interposed.

"Ah," Revere answered, "I well appreciate, my friend, the spirit of gallantry which leads you to make that remark. But as a matter of fact, what can humanity think of a programme which embraces the renunciation of all mere carnal pleasures for the higher, nobler ones of the soul? Alas, we all of us have too much of the Adam after the fall in us to ever aspire to the Adam before the fall."

"Surely," replied Perry, really at a loss now as to what Revere was driving at, "surely, there is nothing wrong in that if that is all your programme contains. As a matter of fact, you know, the boys have a sort of idea that you hold that pleasure should be abolished altogether?"

"I am sorry for 'the general idea,' " Revere

answered, smiling; "and yet, it is but natural that people should run to extremes. What else do they think?"

"Why, er, you know, er—er—they say that you think that a man should never have anything to do with a woman, that is, you know, with girls, don't you know——"

Revere gave a short laugh.

"Well," he said, "perhaps they're right. Come, what do you think, Mr. Perry? What views do you hold on our relations with woman?"

"Why, er—er—don't you see, er—er—I have never really devoted any thought to the subject——"

"Ah, yes. And yet, how important a subject it is! It strikes so deeply into all principles, and especially those of love!"

"Eh, yes, then you do believe in love?" Perry interrogated.

"Believe in love? Why, certainly, man. Who does not believe in that holiest of all religions?"

"I didn't know——"

"Yes, yes. I know the popular misconception. And yet, little as you would think it,

there is no one who advocates love, the true, the only love, as earnestly as I do."

"The true love?"

"Yes, the only love worthy the name. Ah, what do your libertines know of the meaning of that sweet word? No, no, its appreciation goes hand in hand with the utmost purity only. Take the last away and all else flees of its own accord."

Perry nodded, as if in approval. At that moment the waiter appeared with the check. Perry hastened to settle the bill and they strolled out of the restaurant and up Nassau Street, Perry congratulating himself on having laid a good foundation for future inroads into Revere's confidence, and Revere happy at having found so congenial a colleague.

CHAPTER IV.

A GLIMPSE OF PARADISE.

HAVING broken the ice of Revere's reticence, Perry did not allow the fissure to become closed again. In a thousand little ways, so easy to discover if one looks for them, he found opportunities for exhibiting his professed regard for the young Westerner. On his side, Revere was not at all averse to the formation of so promising a friendship.

Thus it happened that the passing of two or three days saw Revere and Perry on the most intimate of terms. The other men of the staff, knowing Perry for what he was, wondered, while Duffit could scarcely conceal his glee at the fine way in which his little plot was developing.

Late one night the two new friends had, on Perry's invitation, strolled down to the Battery.

The hour was late, and save for an occasional

homeless wanderer, slinking from one part of the park to another, as the policeman on post drove him from the bench on which he was snatching a wink of sleep, the sea-wall was entirely deserted. The great full moon and the cloudless sky were in harmony with the glistening lights of the opposite shores and the gentle washing of the waters made appropriate music to the enchanting scene. It was such a setting as the poet might select for some heart-touching ballad, and under its influence Revere's heart melted, and he talked to Perry as he had never talked before.

Love, the beautiful, the divine love, was the subject of their conversation, and it was not long before Revere had confided to Perry that he was no stranger to the passion. It was a queer story—that one of his—he confessed. He was not sure whether he ought to tell about it, and yet, it was such a beautiful story.

"Ah, Perry," Revere said, "if you only knew the beauty of such love as mine!" and then he bent his head and gazed at the rippling water with large, almost burning eyes.

Without evincing any curiosity, Perry managed to lead up to the point of the happy woman's name.

Revere laughed lightly.

"Strange as it may seem," he answered, "I know no more than her first name and that—is sacred."

Perry lifted his eyebrows in surprise.

"It is a strange affair," Revere went on, noticing the other's surprise; "but all the sweeter for its strangeness. There can be no harm in telling you about it, and it may serve to show you what that passion which I call 'Love' means."

Perry bowed his head.

"It all came about in this manner," Revere continued: "You probably know that portion of Central Park which is called 'The Ramble.' As I have my rooms quite near the East Seventy-second Street entrance, and as I am an early riser, I got in the habit of straying over to 'The Ramble' every morning or so, and there, in that beautiful little imitation of Nature's wilderness, imagining myself back in my Western home. You probably know the squirrels which are so numerous in that part of the park? Well, they soon came to know me, and I took great delight in bringing a bag of nuts and feeding the little rascals,

until they became quite tame, and, at my whistle, would come scampering from their hiding places and clamber up the back of my seat and play in my lap and dance around and around me like the happy little fellows they are.

“One morning, coming somewhat later than usual, I found that but a few of my little friends answered my call. Curious to learn the cause of the sudden desertion, I went winding in and out along the paths, repeating my whistle again and again, but in vain.

“Finally, as I turned into the path which skirts along the lake shore, the whistle died upon my lips and I stood stock-still, gazing at the prettiest picture that ever mortal eye rested on.

“There were all my friends, nay, two or three times the number which I generally entertained, all gathered around a boulder projecting over the path, and on the boulder sat a woman, with her back toward me, feeding the animals with sweets and nuts.

“Struck with the beauty of the picture, and not wishing to disturb the friendly group, I was just turning to retreat, when the bagful of

nuts I carried in my hand slipped, the paper split as it struck the asphalt, and the contents went rolling in all directions. The ever-hungry rascals, who had turned at the sound of the falling bag, no sooner spied me than they made a rush in my direction and were soon crawling all over me and into my pockets and bosom, while the lady remained entirely deserted.

“Hesitating about my course in the emergency, I advanced with the half-formed idea of apologizing for involuntarily enticing her friends away from the lady. But hardly had I had time to take off my hat and begin to stammer out an ‘I beg your pardon,’ when I lifted my eyes to her face and remained dumb!

“Ah, my dear Perry, you may talk of divine beauty, and a heavenly spirit, but surely such a picture as this girl presented has never before been seen on earth. The pure, almost transparent skin, the deep-blue eyes, the ripe, full lips, the pearl-like, even teeth which peeped from beneath them, and the golden halo of hair which formed a fitting setting for so immaculate a presence, these were things seldom seen outside of poets’ dreams. She smiled

upon me as she saw my embarrassment, and in a voice as soft as it was clear and tender, begged me not to apologize. She had remarked that her little friends had not been quite as ravenous lately as they had been wont to be. She inferred that some one must have been feeding them before her usual arrival. I confessed that I was the guilty individual, and the subjects of our conversation having now all scampered off to where my luckless nuts were rolling around on the pavement, we remained silent for a few minutes, watching the animals dart hither and thither, snatching a nut here and, burying it there, and then coming back for more.

“Exchanging the compliments of the day, I left her a few minutes later, but you may imagine why I found it convenient to come to the park an hour or so later than usual the next day. Alas! she was not there, nor did she appear the day following, nor yet the day after that. But on the fourth morning I found her there, and hastening forward, greeted her with a great gladness at my heart, and was overjoyed to see that she was not annoyed.

“Well, what need is there for me to tell you

the rest of the story at any length? Before many days had past we found it quite convenient to come to feed the squirrels at the same time every morning, and as soon as the first coldness had worn off, I found that no woman had ever fulfilled my ideal as she did. Those calm blue eyes could flash with the fire of heaven and those tremulous red lips could form words which thrilled my soul. Ah, Perry, could you but know the joy of such a sacred friendship as can exist only between the man and woman who are made for each other and are intended for each other by that mystic force which ordains all things!

“I see her now, sometimes every day, sometimes every two days. I understand that she is now living further downtown and finds it quite hard to come up to the park early. And yet she comes. I have never asked her who she was, because I never cared to know. I know her given name, because it was her wish that I should address her by it, but further I have never tried to press my inquiries and never shall. Why should I? It is not for her position—high as it doubtless is, that I would love her;—her identity is a matter of

supreme indifference to me. I love her for herself, and I know that she is the personification of all that is true and noble and pure and generous.

“So I love her, and better still, I know that she loves me. I know it by her eyes and by her blushes and her presence. I know it, because it could not be otherwise, and so I am happy and can well afford to look with contempt upon those who seek love in the arms of Anteros or at the shrine of Bacchus.”

During the latter part of his recital, Revere had spoken more as if he were talking to himself than to an auditor, and even Perry could not help being somewhat moved by the strange story. But shaking off so undesirable a feeling, the latter, having achieved his aim, gave a short laugh and slapped Revere on the back.

“There you go, my boy,” he said in a patronizing tone, “raving about your young lady in the most approved Byronic fashion. But wait, just wait till you discover what a deceitful piece of baggage woman is. Oh, I’ll bet you’ll sing a different tune then!”

Revere started at the sudden familiarity and bit his lip. Then he arose and put his hands in his pockets.

"I think it is time for me to return," he said.

Perry cackled.

"Just as you please. Nice place, though, this, for 'dreaming love's young dream,' as the song puts it, isn't it? All the adjuncts of poetry—trees, water, moonlight, sky— H'm, who wouldn't be a poet amid such surroundings? By Jove, I have half a mind to fall in love myself. I swear, there's nothing——"

"Let's go," Revere interrupted, frowning.

"I'm with you," Perry answered, cowed a little by Revere's angry look.

"And remember, what I told you to-night is a matter of sacred confidence. You understand?"

Perry nodded. The remainder of the walk up Broadway and to Printing House Square was taken in silence, Revere gloomy—regretting his sudden outburst of confidence, and Perry smiling and smirking without, and raging within, at the sturdy figure by his side.

CHAPTER V.

“HE’S BLACK!”

“PLEASE, Mr. Revere.”

Revere dropped his pencil and turned around in his chair.

“Well?”

“Please, Mr. Revere,” the office boy said, gazing down at the toe of his shoe, “may I speak t’ you?”

“Why, certainly, Joe. What is it?”

“You see, sir, it’s dis ’ere way. You know, sir, as I like you very much, Mr. Revere, an’ when I see th’ other fellows a’ mak-in’ game of you I don’t like it, sir.”

Revere’s face became grave.

“Ah, Joe,” he answered, “wait till you have lived as long as I have, then you will know what a common thing it is to be ‘made game of.’ But what is it that bothers you so very much?”

"Why, you see, sir, it's Mr. Parrot—I mean Perry."

Revere started.

"Why, what do you mean, my boy?"

"Oh, please now, don't go fer t' git angry at a feller, will you, Mr. Revere? You see, it's dis way. Mr. Parrot—we all calls 'im Parrot, sir—he's a reg'lar nigger, he is. Dey ain't not'in' white erbaut 'im, dat's what dey ain't. He jes' goes 'roun' like's if he owned the whole eart' an' he's not'in' but a big fraud, an' we fellers what's been here long knows it, too, you kin betcher life."

"Now, now, Joe, don't you think you are going it rather too fast?" Revere remonstrated.

"No, sir, I ain't, if you please, sir. Ye know I wouldn't tell yer no lie, sir. He's a bad 'un all t'rough an' t'rough, he is. Ye see, sir, we all on us likes yer, 'cause ye treats us fellers white. Dey's blokes what t'inks as how boys is not'in' but pieces uv m'cheenry t' be ordered 'round 'ere an' there jest like the devil an' all. Dem's the kind o' blokes what gets it in the neck every time we gets a crack at 'em, I kin jest tell ye; an' Parrot, he's a bird among 'em. Hully Gee,

dey ain't a man in de place what likes Parrot, not even Mr. Timbers hisself. Why, Mr. Revere does yer know how Parrot come 'ere foist? Holy Jimminy, bless me an' die if he didn't come as baseball editor. Gee! He knew 'bout as much 'bout baseball as a kioodle knows erbaut writin' dime novels. Well, sir, arter he got t'rough doin baseball, an' it didn't take 'im long t' git t'rough neither—for he was fired outen the work quicker'n he knew what struck 'im—then, Mr. Timbers, he didn't want 'm in his d'partment, but they had t' find place fer 'im somm'eres, so they put 'im in wid Mr. Duffit. So there they be, a pair on 'em. But Parrot, he's meaner'n dirt, he is. You know, Mr. Revere, he goes 'roun' you, showin' the white front an' lookin' all like a reg'lar gen'lman, but he ain't an' 'e never was, nohow. I tell yer what, Mr. Revere, if ye don't believe me, ye kin jest ask o' Mr. O'Tear. He'll tell yer erbaut Parrot all right. Yer oughter have seen what Mr. O'Tear done to Parrot one day, you'd have burst your buttons laffin'. Sure, t'was the funniest sight I ever seen.

"Yer see, sir," Joe rattled on, quite un-

mindful of Revere's haggard look, and reveling in his own abuse of the hateful "Parrot," "yer see, sir, Mr. O'Tear, he don't stand no bossin' from any one, so one day, when 'e was a-workin' on a picter fer the sassiety page, Parrot, he comes up and begins t' talk big, sayin' as how Mr. O'Tear wuz t' do this an' that an' fix that up an' scratch this out an' so forth. So Mr. O'Tear, he don't say nothin' fer a long time, but goes on, scratch—scratch, wid his pen, never payin' no 'tention an' we fellers all a hangin' aroun' an' snickerin' an' all the artists a-winkin', and Parrot a-growin' madder and madder all the time. So, fin'ly Parrot, he says: 'I won't let dis 'ere picter go in like that,' says he, in the swaggerest way you kin t'ink, sir. Den Mr. O'Tear, he looks up and says, real quiet like, says he: 'T'ell ye won't, an' who the devil be you?' So Parrot, he gits on 'is ear intirely, he does, an' he becomes rattled an' yells out, he yells: 'I'd have ye know as how I'm de 'sistant sassiety editor, I am, an' anytin' I says goes!'

"So Mr. O'Tear, he t'rows down his pen, an' he stands up an' he looks at Parrot, a-measurin' 'im like, he does, an' he says t' 'im:

'Parrot, you git.' But Parrot, he don't pay no 'tention t' 'is wisdom teeth, he don't, an' he stands there, an' Mr. O'Tear, he says: 'Anytin' yer says goes, eh? Well, den, yer goes, too!'

"An' so, afore Parrot knows what's struck 'im, he catches 'im be th' back uv 'is coat an' th' seat uv 'is pants an' he says 'once,' says he, an' 'twice' an' 'three' times an' there's Parrot a-sprawlin' out in the hall an' the whole crowd a-laughin' fit t' split.

"So, ever since dat time, Parrot an' O'Tear don't say no word, one to th' other. Parrot, yer see, 'e went t' th' court an' tried t' git a warrant out t' arrest Mr. O'Tear fer 'asault an' batt'ry, but they give 'im th' big laugh in th' court an' everyone giv' him th' marble heart in th' office, an' 'e ain't had no picnic since, I kin tell you fer a fact."

"But what has all this to do with me, Joe?" Revere asked, passing his hand over the boy's tow hair.

"Why, ye see, sir, it's dis 'ere way. Parrot, he's got it in fer you, 'cause I hoid 'im tell one of the fellers as how yer was a ipercrit. I dunno what a ipercrit means,

'less it's in fightin' an' I ain't never heard as you was a fighter, sir, an' den it ain't no ipercrit, but a uppercut. But th' fellow, he laughed an' he answered, as how he didn't see what Parrot wanted t' 'sociate wid yer, for if he t' ought as how yer wuz a ipercrit an' Parrot 'e scowled an' said, 'dam' several times, an' so I sp'ose ipercrit mus' be suthin' pretty tough. So I just t'inks as how I'll tell yer erbaut it, sir, 'cause why? 'Cause I knows as how you'se is a gen'lman an' Parrot 'e ain't as good even as a 'Chink, an' I hates 'im like poison."

"There, there," Revere answered, twirling his pencil between his fingers, "you have told me enough now, Joe. I'll look out for 'Mr. Parrot' in the future and stop his calling me an 'ipercrit.' So run away, Joe; I think your'e wanted at the desk."

"All right, Mr. Revere," Joe replied, moving away, "but look out for Parrot. He's black!"

As Revere heard Joe's last words, his eyes involuntarily traveled to where Perry was sitting at his desk. His heart bounded as he observed Perry's eyes fastened upon him with a malignant stare. For a moment their glances

met, then Perry smirked and bent over his "copy" and Revere turned back to his desk. But his heart was heavy and the work he did that evening was not of the sort which would have won him high commendation from his chief.

CHAPTER VI.

FIRST BLOOD.

THE following afternoon found Revere at his desk quite early, for he felt that he should, in a measure, pay up for the previous night's dereliction of duty. And yet, he had to confess to himself that he hardly felt any better for the night's rest. There was something queer in the atmosphere of the office, he said to himself. Surely, never was there a more idiotic set of men than the one which surrounded him. What had struck them that day? There they were, flitting about from desk to desk, slapping one another's backs, and now and again progressing from a low giggle to a quickly suppressed guffaw. What was all this happiness about? And why did they now and again, when they thought he was not looking, cast side glances at Revere, glances full of some

mysterious meaning, and then turn away and fairly shake with suppressed laughter?

Disgusted with the spectacle, Revere turned about and fell to examining the morning's edition of the paper. To the conscientious newspaper man it is a paramount duty to closely explore every inch of his paper's columns, advertisements and all, in order that no important, although possibly small, news item should escape him, and that he should at no time be guilty of the unpardonable sin of "duplication."

Up and down, up and down; now one page is finished and now another. To the trained eye a "head" tells everything, and two or three stray lines convey the whole plot of a "story." Now the third page. Good God! What is this? Revere's eyes fairly started from their sockets as they rested upon this "head:"

"The Ramble, the Squirrels and Love."

The title told the whole story, but hoping against hope and determined to see all there was to be seen, Revere sat still and read all there was of the story, and this was what he read:

"New Yorkers who complain of the prosaic

spirit of their city are certainly not acquainted with that most delightful spot which fairly equals, if it does not surpass, the most fabled retreats of Europe in romantic possibilities. How many of our fellow-citizens have ever taken advantage of the opportunities offered by 'The Ramble' in New York's Central Park? Ask those who have done so and they will tell you of the delights of the place.

"In the first place, there are the winding paths and the cozy nooks, everyone of which offers a fitting shrine for Beauty to preside over and Beast, or to specify more correctly, Man, to worship at.

"Then there are the squirrels. Surely, there never was so rapacious a lot. So if Beauty and Beast wish to meet, all they have to do is to touch upon that common chord, viz., the squirrels, and the nuts will serve as the messengers of Cupid; the weapons of offense and defense; and finally there are the rustic benches upon which the two B's can repose at ease and discuss at leisure the great question of Love.

"A great place is 'The Ramble' if one takes advantage of it!"

For a few moments after he had finished reading the article Revere remained almost stunned. Then the full meaning of the affair dawned upon him. So this was the significance of all those little attentions and smirking and toadyings! This was the cause of Mr. Perry's lamblike subjection and most praiseworthy self-sacrifice! It was to wriggle himself into his victim's confidence, to worm out of him his heart's dearest secrets, and for what purpose? To ridicule them and parody them in the sight of all men!

Now he understood the queer looks and the giggles and sneers of that whole crowd. The story had gone around; Perry had retailed to all the information he had gained from him and he, John Revere, was the laughing stock of the entire staff!

And what now? Yes, there was the question—what now? How should he answer this studied insult? Should he let it pass by without observation? This was what Perry had probably counted on. Revere, he had probably thought, would not care to create a scene, and so he would eat his own heart out with impotent rage and endeavor to show a calm exterior.

But no, Mr. Perry, sharp, astute Mr. Perry; for the once your plans have miscarried! No, no, said Revere to himself, silence would not do in this case. Perry must be taught a lesson which should last him for a lifetime. And yet, there was she, his Elaine, the heroine of his dreams. Pshaw! The story was public already. Everyone knew it. There was no further harm entailed. Yes, it was the only thing to do. He slowly arose from his seat. Suddenly a hand was brought down on his shoulder. He looked up quickly. O'Tear's bluff face was bending over him. Those usually small gray eyes were now large and hard as steel, those usually flaccid nostrils were distended and a grim expression rested upon the thin lips.

"What are you going to do?" he asked, in the purest English.

"What do you mean?" Revere asked.

"I want to know what you are going to do. I know the entire story. I heard about it from the boys. I saw you when you came in, I watched you; I saw when you reached that dastardly article. Now, I want to know what you are going to do."

There was a moment's pause.

"I am going," Revere finally answered, in slow, measured words, "to choke the life out of the rascal's body."

O'Tear's hand tightened its hold upon Revere's arm.

"You are my sort," he said. "Do nothing rash, however," he continued, "smash him, kick him, brand him for the coward he is, but for heaven's sake, man, do nothing you may be sorry for in the future. Do you understand me?"

"I understand," Revere replied. Then he calmly looked around the room, studded with its numerous desks. Perry's face was nowhere to be seen.

"I am going to look for him," Revere said to O'Tear in the same monotonous, harsh voice.

"Do; and remember what I told you," O'Tear answered.

In and out among the desks Revere walked, the whole staff following his motions with morbid interest. Still no Perry. Now he was at the entrance from the hallway. What was that he heard? Two voices. One was Timbers'; the other—he stopped.

"Don't go in, man; he looks ready to commit murder!" Timbers was saying in a pleading tone.

"Nonsense," Perry's voice responded. "He's not the chap to do anything rash. He wouldn't lay a finger on me. Do you suppose I would have done the trick if I had thought it would be otherwise? No, sir, he'll try to make me feel sorry, heh-heh-heh, and we'll all have the laugh on him!"

"I tell you, you are mistaken, man. It was a mean enough job, and had I known about it, that story would never have gone in, but as it is, I must prevent mischief in the office. I tell you, you are mistaken. You——"

"He is not mistaken," Revere's cold voice interrupted as he came into the hall. "Mr. Perry, I wish to see you in the office for a few minutes. Will you oblige me?"

Now that he was face to face with his victim, Perry's momentary courage oozed out in an instant. He shrunk behind Timbers and called out:

"No violence, now remember, no violence. I won't have it. I'll have you in court if you

are guilty of violence. A joke's a joke, you know, and I won't have any violence!"

Timbers became entirely disgusted at this outbreak.

"Ugh," he growled, "you coward, who has talked violence to you? Go in there like a man, and take your medicine, now that you're in for it. By the eternal jumping jack, but I never thought I'd see one of my men make such an exhibition of himself."

"Just the same," Perry continued, positively whining, "I won't have any violence."

"I am waiting for you, Mr. Perry," Revere remarked.

"Oh, all right, I'm coming, I'm coming, but remember, no infraction of the law! The constitution protects me. As an American citizen I am protected from personal violence." With these words upon his lips Perry entered the room. There was a general stir. Now something would happen, everyone said to himself, as they came marching in—Perry—now not that radiant Perry who had a few hours before told amused groups all about his little joke—but a crestfallen, shrinking, uncertain Perry, in front, Revere second and

Timbers, anxious, but still smiling, bringing up the rear.

No sooner were the two well into the room than Revere bent over and said to Perry in a low voice:

"If you attempt to resist for a moment, I'll crush the life out of your worthless carcass."

"No violence," Perry almost blubbered.

"Shut up," Revere curtly ordered, and clutching his unhappy victim by the nape of his coat, marched him to the head of the room. In an instant all became silent. Timbers only ventured to interfere.

"Revere," he began, "you know——"

"I know just this," Revere interrupted, "any man who tries to reason with me at the present moment will fare badly. You are no exception, Mr. Timbers."

Timbers was silenced and remained where he was, awaiting developments.

Having marched Perry to the head of the room, Revere stopped and turned around. "Gentlemen!" he began. His voice low though it was, penetrated every corner of the room. The men of the staff were but too ready to listen.

"Gentlemen," Revere repeated, "I have a painful duty to perform. I am compelled to play the rôle of announcer to-day and to make known to you the greatest rascal and most shameless scamp that has ever defiled the air by breathing it."

Perry writhed, but Revere's clutch was as firm as steel.

"Now, gentlemen," Revere continued, "it may interest you to know that I once thought a good deal of this man. So good an opinion, in fact, did I have of him, that I confided to him many facts about my life which I had hitherto kept to myself as things sacred.

"Well, gentlemen, how this man has used my confidence, you all know. That he counted upon a different *dénouement*, you may take for certain. His mistake he now appreciates, and so will you, presently. Now, what do you think I am going to do? Crush the life out of his worthless body? Hardly. Cripple him? Not at all. I am going to brand him as a coward and poltroon after this fashion."

With these words Revere raised his open hand high in the air and brought it down with terrific force upon his victim's right cheek.

Then before the latter, or any of these present, had time to recover their senses, and while Perry was articulating the words: "No violence," Revere changed hands and inflicted another blow upon the unhappy schemer's left cheek, after which he gave him a contemptuous kick which sent him sprawling upon the floor, and walking to his desk, picked up his newspaper and proceeded with his interrupted reading.

To describe the scene which ensued would be a difficult task indeed. For a moment, as Perry's prostrate body remained inert upon the ground, it looked as if he had indeed received his last blow. Timbers rushed up and with the assistance of several of the men lifted Perry from the floor, when he wriggled out of their hands and fell upon his knees, crying: "No violence!"

Never had the office presented such a scene of turmoil as at the moment when, with the help of several of his comrades, Perry made his way downstairs and into a cab which had been hastily called. A trail of blood from his nose and lips marked his footsteps and ever and anon he clasped his hands together and

dodged first to one side and then to the other, as if to escape the repetition of those terrible blows.

Perry gone, the men fell to discussing the occurrence among themselves. Some there were, indeed, who were inclined to forget the provocation which had led Revere to act as he had, but the majority of them felt ashamed of the part they had played in the dastardly "joke" on the young Westerner, and so it happened that before long the word "Shame" which some had uttered at first, was entirely forgotten, and the men said to one another that it had "served Perry right."

As for Revere, he paid no further attention to the crowd, but kept on reading his paper, two bright spots on his cheeks and a slight twitching of his nostrils, being the only remaining signs of his late excitement.

But he was not to get off so modestly. O'Tear, who had kept at a distance during the entire performance, now came up to him, and grasping his hand, shook it heartily.

"Me boy," he exclaimed delightedly, "ye're a buck! Ye're a lulu from 'way back, an' don't ye fergit it! I never seen a thing done

so neat in me life, an' chuck me in the gutter 'f I ain't proud o' you."

Encouraged by O'Tear's example, the other men now came up, singly and in groups, to express to Revere their appreciation of his conduct, and before long he found that what weeks of gentlemanliness and unobtrusiveness had failed to accomplish, two blows had done in an instant, for they one and all joined in offering him their friendship, such as it was.

Last of all came Mr. Duffit. Unwilling to become conspicuous by setting himself up as the only condemner of Revere's revenge, he strolled over to him, and rolling his cigar between his fingers, assured Revere that he was "deuced sorry Perry had made such a fool of himself, don't you know, but the man was clearly daft, and your punishment will surely serve to recall him to his senses." Having done which he concluded that the situation required nothing more from him and lounged back into his chair, where he leaned back and chuckled in anticipation of the racket there would be when the story would come out of how the "Saintly Revere" had fallen victim to the guiles of some well-known Broadway belle.

As for Perry, after spending the day in recovering from the effects of the terrible whipping he had received, he showed up at the office the following morning as if nothing had happened at all, and, within a few days, was reciting, for the benefit of interested, if incredulous, groups, the story of his "awful fight with that chap Revere, who would never have got the best of him had it not been that he slipped on a banana peel and so gave Revere an opportunity to strike him while he was down." And before long he actually came to believe the story himself—so much so that he would have been ready to swear to its truth in all good faith, "bein'," as Joe put it in elucidating the matter to 'Gene, his fellow laborer in the dark and devious paths of newspaper office boyism, "one o' them fellers what t'inks dey is on de stage allers, an' putty soon begins t' b'lieve t'ings dey has in deir minds, so that, if dey t'inks long enough, dey b'lieves as how dey is millionaires, an' when dey goes daft dey becomes dead broke. See?"

And 'Gene "saw."

CHAPTER VII.

A NEWCOMER.

TIMBERS cleared his throat and looked important.

"Gentlemen," he announced to the men, whom he had gathered around his desk, "we are about to have a new and desirable addition to our staff."

Here he paused, to give greater emphasis to what was coming.

"Gentlemen," he resumed, "the addition is a-a-a lady!"

"Ah-ah-h," the crowd ejaculated.

"And what's more, gentlemen," Timbers continued, "it's a young and a pretty lady, and better still, a lady of artistic tendencies."

"She is not to be a reporter, then?" Duffit made bold to inquire.

Timbers turned a withering look upon him.

"A reporter? No. We have one lady reporter. Miss Overley answers all purposes.

No. This lady is an artist and is going to make pictures—pictures which shall raise our woman's department far above the standard of any one of our contemporaries."

Within the confines of the "city room," Timbers' announcement furnished sufficient food for a day's gossip. A young and pretty woman was enough of an acquisition in herself, but when she was also an artist, why, it was a matter for universal gratulation.

The members of the art department, of course came in for the greatest amount of chaffing. That was natural. Hints were freely thrown about of broken hearts and turned heads, while love sonnets and ditties were scattered about in profusion.

And so Miss Sophie Duval came to take her place in the ranks of the pen and ink experts. Where she had dropped from no one knew. Her engagement had been the work of the "higher powers" of the editor-in-chief's sanctum.

For a few days after her advent in the office, Sophie Duval was left strictly to herself. In that narrow atmosphere, where ridicule lurks in every corner and jealousy furnishes the

principal impulse to endeavor, it takes a soul much braver than the ordinary to make a step which is out of the regular routine. But one day Mr. Timbers himself stepped up to Miss Duval's desk and spoke to her for seven and a half consecutive minutes; after which the entire force insisted on introductions, and Miss Duval became common property—in the minds of the staff.

No penned description of Miss Duval can convey the impression one received of her personality in her presence. A brunette of the most decided type, with melting black eyes and straight, regular features, even the merest passing glance would have been sufficient to apprise one of the presence of an extraordinary girl, for girl she was, not more than twenty years having marked her life-span. Her slim, tall, willowy figure, with its exquisite proportions, combined to charm the eye of the beholder, while the soft, low voice ravished the senses in its melodious flow.

If the men in the office had been joyous at the prospect of the girl's advent and had reveled in the anticipation of the "jolly good times" they were to have with her, they experi-

enced a distinct disappointment as soon as they came to know her. Where they had expected to find some giddy aspirant for the joys of that youthful chimera: Bohemia, with whom unconventionality should count as the highest of all virtues; they found a woman of the highest acquirements, one who prevented familiarity before its inception, and inspired respect simultaneously with admiration. That every man in the office should soon fall hopelessly in love with Miss Duval was a thing to be expected, and that she rejected the slightest advances from any of them was a matter which excited no surprise. And yet she was neither haughty nor austere. In her own simple way, she gave men to understand that they were making themselves disagreeable, and most of them required no more than one hint. Those who needed another got it very quickly, however.

If one could conceive a soul like Duffit's fired with love, then Duffit was the most lovelorn swain in the office. To his degenerate nature, steeped in the filth of debauchery, there was something peculiarly sweet and attractive in the calm, almost frigid personality of the

young girl. It took all the self-restraint acquired by a lifetime of artificiality for him to hold in check his passion, such as it was; for he knew that it would not do to attack the girl as the others had attacked her. No, he must devise some surer, more systematic way.

So it happened that one morning found Mr. Duffit in a tremendous rage. It took all Timbers' suavity to calm him down sufficiently to elicit an explanation.

"It's an eternally d—d shame!" Duffit howled.

"What is?" Timbers asked.

"Why, just look at these papers, look at them, and then look at this order of mine to the art department! I tell you I won't stand it! Here they have all gone and published this picture and I ordered it to go in last night, too, and it was never made. Do you suppose I'm going to sit around and be beat by every paper in town in this fashion? Not by a d—d sight! The art department is rotten all through, and I've got to have some arrangement made to have my pictures drawn whenever I want them, or——"

"But," Timbers interposed, "this picture

doesn't amount to anything. It's nothing important——"

"That doesn't make a d—d bit of difference!" Duffit insisted. "It isn't the first time I've been served this way, and there's got to be an end to it!"

"But you know we can't give you an artist all to yourself. There isn't enough work on the society stuff to keep a man busy. With the exception of Miss Duval, there is no one in the office all day, either. You know that they are all liable to be called on to go outside on assignments at any moment."

"I don't care who it is, or how it's done, but I must have some one to whom I can give my own orders, that's all. If there's no one else but that girl—what's her name?—why, let it be her, but some one I must and will have."

"Well, I'll try to arrange it," Timbers answered, and Duffit walked off in triumph, chuckling at the way he had circumvented "the old man."

"I wonder what the devil he's up to?" muttered Timbers to himself as he looked after Duffit's retreating figure. "He snapped me up about Miss Duval before I could catch my

breath. Humph!" and he leaned back and fairly shook with suppressed laughter.

"The idiot!" he ejaculated.

Nevertheless, the matter was soon arranged, and Miss Duval received orders to divide her time equally between the woman's page and the society work. Duffit, accordingly, presented himself, and in the most patronizing manner imaginable, took up an hour and a half in explaining how he wanted his work done.

"Not," said he, in conclusion, "that I want to make matters hard for you, Miss Duval. On the contrary, I shall take great pleasure in making the work as light as possible, if you will only allow me. As a matter of fact, you will find me quite a light taskmaster." And up went his upper lip in a grin, disclosing a row of large, yellowish teeth, which were ordinarily concealed by his heavy blond mustache.

Miss Duval merely nodded in reply, and Duffit, finding no further excuse for staying, strolled off, quite well satisfied with himself and his neat little plan. Had he, however, caught the contemptuous look with which Miss Duval followed his tall, ungainly figure, it is

doubtful whether he would have enjoyed quite as great a sense of self-satisfaction.

After that day it became the usual thing for Duffit to hang about Miss Duval's desk for hours at a time. Now it was this pretext and now another, but Mr. Duffit's inventive faculties seemed to be limitless. After a few days had passed, he made bold to ask Miss Duval whether she lived far uptown. No, Miss Duval answered. Did not Miss Duval find the elevated railroad an awful nuisance? Not at all. Did not Miss Duval think that there were many very rude men in the trains? Would not Miss Duval then allow him to escort her home that evening? No, she was very sorry, but she was going to Brooklyn that day. To-morrow evening then? She did not care to trouble Mr. Duffit. It would be no trouble at all—it would be the greatest pleasure. Really, Mr. Duffit was complimenting. And Duffit retired from the first round, beaten.

But in a day or two the attack was renewed.

“Really, Miss Duval, I think you are working too hard,” Duffit ventured in the most amiable manner he could muster.

"Not at all," Miss Duval answered.

"Do you take any recreation?"

"Some."

"Ah, Miss Duval, if you would grant me the pleasure of increasing your recreation. Would you honor me with your company to the theater some evening?"

"I don't like theaters."

"The opera, then?"

"I really have no ear for music."

"I should be delighted to have your company for a country drive."

"I thank you very much, Mr. Duffit, but I have a great horror of horses."

"The devil's in the girl!" Duffit said to himself as he walked away.

Two days after this the climax came. Miss Duval had already become cognizant of the fact that there was no little gossip going around about Mr. Duffit's attentions to her. So, when he came and sat down at half-past one in the afternoon, she waited until two, and then calmly took her lunch basket out of her desk and proceeded to arrange her meager repast. Then, while Duffit was still talking, she very deliberately fell to her meal, biting away with

the greatest gusto and paying no more attention to him than if he were not in existence.

And Duffit gave it up.

After that day he left his orders for her in little notes, which began the first time with "Miss Sophie Duval. Dear madam," and soon got to running: "My dear Miss Duval." But one day some of the boys got together a lot of envelopes, and addressing them "To Miss Duval, from Mr. Duffit," heaped them a foot or more high on the young lady's desk. Mr. Duffit happening to pass by before Miss Duval arrived, saw the point of the joke, swore quite extensively, and within a week had returned to the regular art department for his work, while Miss Duval was left in comparative peace.

But Duffit was not the sort of man to rest quiet long. Having experienced a defeat at Miss Duval's hands, he determined to be revenged, and very naturally settled upon Revere as the most satisfactory agent of his vengeance. Hence, Revere was not a little surprised when Duffit came to him one day, and, in the most friendly manner imaginable,

asked him what he thought of their new colleague.

"Whom do you mean?" Revere asked.

"Why, Miss Duval."

"Miss Duval? I have never had the pleasure of meeting the young lady."

"No?" Duffit exclaimed in affected surprise.

"That's too bad. I really must see that you are not neglected. Come with me, and I'll introduce you."

"No, excuse me," Revere replied, "not in this fashion. If the opportunity presents itself I shall be pleased, but——"

"Oh, very well," Duffit responded, laughing, "have your way," and walked off.

But Duffit watched for an opportunity, and soon found it. That same evening he entered the elevator just behind Revere and found Miss Duval already in it. The introduction followed quite naturally, and Revere and Miss Duval met.

A woman is at all times a creature of moods, but all the more so in her likes. Hence, it would be futile to attempt to explain why Miss Duval found Revere's company so agreeable that she volunteered the information that she

was going up the Third Avenue elevated and wondered whether he was going the same way. Possibly it was because Revere did not do what ninety-nine men out of a hundred would have done in his situation—ask her which way she was going and then discover that his destination lay in the same direction. As it was, they were soon on their way uptown together, and Revere had to admit to himself that he had seen many women less entertaining than Miss Duval.

It followed quite naturally that Revere should stop at Miss Duval's desk for a few moments every day and exchange the customary compliments. In a less narrow sphere such things would have been taken at their true worth, but in the newspaper office there is but one construction put upon any familiarity between a man and a woman, and that construction is never flattering to the latter.

It was just this that Duffit had counted upon, and he fairly beamed with pleasure as he saw the little plan he had arranged progressing so favorably. He sounded Perry and found that individual quite ready to go into any underhand scheme to annoy Revere.

"Only be careful," Perry stipulated, "that he doesn't get on to me. Ugh! I hate the brute!"

"Nonsense," Duffit replied, "do your work cleverly and he will never know whom to blame."

So it came to pass that rumors began to circulate about Revere and Miss Duval. No one knew, apparently, whence they emanated, and no one was willing to acknowledge their authorship. But the rumors were there and reached the ears of everyone outside of the two most interested. Things might have gone on in this way an indefinite length of time had not O'Tear happened to become informed. He immediately told Revere all he knew. Revere became livid with rage.

"Wait, me boy," O'Tear counseled, "trust your uncle. I'm a goin' on a still hunt an' when I find out the feller as starts this 'ere tork, there's agoin' t' be big trouble."

True to his word, O'Tear lost no time in making inquiries, and soon struck Perry's track. Within twenty-four hours he had the matter sifted down, and the next evening Perry found himself confronted by Revere with

a demand for an apology. Perry pretended ignorance. Revere caught his nose between his thumb and first finger and gave it a yank.

Perry struck out and received a blow in the chest which sent him spinning half across the room. There was, of course a great commotion in the office, and men came running from all sides. Perry had, meanwhile, regained his feet, this time to be kicked into a corner by the irate victim of his venom. Then the crowd interfered. Revere turned upon his heel and strode off. But Perry had had enough. The next day Timbers received his resignation. Revere smiled when he heard of it.

It was O'Tear who told the whole story in detail to Miss Duval, and he wondered then at the two big tears which rolled down her cheeks.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOVE.

BALMY was the air, green the trees and happy were the songs of the birds as John Revere walked along the western shore of the lake in Central Park, searching with eager eyes for the form he longed so much to see. At last, as he made the turn at the northern path, he spied her, coming toward him, and his heart bounded and his face flushed as he quickened his pace.

She was a regal woman, truly. Tall and of gracious bearing, with a mass of golden hair gathered on her head, the stray ringlets curling lovingly over her brow; her liquid blue eyes harmonizing well with the soft, satin-like complexion, and the sweet curve of her rather full lips bespeaking her gentle as well as passionate nature. She was, indeed, a picture for poets to rave over, as she appeared to

Revere that morning, fresh as the morning rose and thrilling with the happiness of life in her every fiber.

"Elaine!" he gently exclaimed, and grasped her two little hands in his own.

"John!" she softly murmured, lingering over the word as if she would fain caress its letters; and her eyes beamed their love into his, so that it was all he could do to keep himself from folding her in his arms and straining her to his heart.

"Ah, Elaine, darling," he murmured, as he gently drew her arm in his and led her up the path, "it is so long since I have seen you!"

"Two long weeks," she answered; "they have seemed to me like years."

"And like centuries to me," he added.

She laughed softly.

"But we may meet oftener again," she said. "We are living quite near here now—we did not find it congenial downtown."

"How happy I am to hear that, my love," he answered. "Alas! life seems so dreary without you. The birds do not sing so sweetly, the sun does not shine so brightly."

Ah, darling, would we could be together always——”

And thus they went on. Who needs to be told the sweet nothings of lovers' talk, the tender looks, the happy sighs? Hours slip by like minutes and the future seems roseate with joy. They wonder how they could ever have lived without each other and laugh because they feel the happiness of living.

Before long, however, Revere and Elaine fell to discussing more serious topics. Revere's ardent love chafed under the restraint which his inability to take his darling to himself forever placed upon him.

Souls like Revere's require the ever-ready sympathy and ever-enduring confidence of some noble woman to stimulate them to the best in their work. In the dark moments of dejection and despair, when the whole world seems well-nigh lost and all ambition appears a delusion, it is just such a presence that lifts the soul from the lowest depth of misery to the highest pinnacles of aspiration and prompts new efforts which are sooner or later crowned with success.

Elaine was to Revere what the sun is to the

bud or the rain to the leaf. She shone upon him and his heart expanded, his brain threw off the chains of apathy and his thoughts flowed as the perfume flows from the body of the rose. She felt with him in his misery, and her gentle tears washed away his grief.

So Revere talked to Elaine about his work and his prospects. He discussed with her characters which figured in the book he was writing and felt absurdly happy because her ideas and his own harmonized so well. Many suggestions he received from her, too—suggestions which startled him by their indications of a ripe judgment and wide understanding; and then he felt happier still as he considered that they really came not so much from a knowledge of the world as from an instinctive comprehension of the laws of right and wrong. She had genius, he said to himself, of an extraordinary sort. What a pleasant dream life passed with such a companion would be!

“Ah, Elaine, dear,” Revere was saying to her as they slowly paced along the shore of the lake, “how long, I wonder, will it be before I can call you mine, my very own, before all the world? Everything seems to go so slowly. It’s almost disheartening.”

Elaine blushed and drooped her eyes, and Revere, thrilled into the veriest ecstasy by her bashful modesty, gave her arm just the slightest squeeze, as he almost whispered:

"Some day, you know, some happy day, we shall go out two and come back one, one forever more, darling."

He paused, but she did not answer.

So they wandered on, and the talk turned to himself again.

"Is it, then, so hard to get a book published?" she asked.

"Hard? Yes, very hard, if it be the first. After one has a success, almost any trash goes, but the first step in this field, as in all others, is a most difficult one to make."

"But yours is bound to be a success, dear?"

"All authors and their friends think so."

She laughed.

"Now you are trying to discourage me, as well as yourself," she pouted.

"Perhaps I was, but I shan't do so again," he promised.

At this moment they passed a slight opening in the trees which border the path, and Revere, perceiving two familiar figures on the

walk below ascending in their direction, halted.

"I must leave you at once, Elaine," he exclaimed, releasing her arm and pressing her hand; "there is some one coming toward us, whom I do not wish to have see you. Come again as soon as you possibly can."

"Yes, John dear," she answered. "Good-by," and hurried off in the direction they had come, the extreme pallor of her face testifying to the shock the sudden parting had caused her.

Revere lingered for a moment, gazing tenderly after her swiftly retreating figure and then, with a sigh, walked on. At the turning of the path, Armstrong and Duffit met him.

"How 'do, Revere!" the two exclaimed in concert.

"Good-morning, gentlemen," Revere stiffly replied, and then turning to Duffit:

"Pardon me, Mr. Duffit, there are a few words I wish to exchange with you in private. Mr. Armstrong will excuse us for a moment or two?"

"Certainly, certainly," Armstrong answered in the most affable manner, "go ahead, I'll wait behind."

"Duffit," Revere sternly said, as soon as they had left Armstrong some twenty paces behind, "I want you to tell me why you came up to this part of the park this morning."

"Why, my dear Revere," Duffit exclaimed, "the park is open to all the world, and I don't see any reason why I should give you an accounting. Besides——"

"I know all about that," Revere impatiently answered, "what I want to know is whether that story of Perry's had anything to do with your coming up here this morning. That's plain, isn't it?"

"Oh," Duffit replied, "I see what you are driving at now. No, I assure you, my boy, I never even thought of you when I came into the park with Armstrong. You see, we were simply——"

"I don't want to know any more about it," Revere interrupted. "I beg your pardon for questioning you, but I owed it to myself to do so. Now let me bid Mr. Armstrong good day."

"Through so soon?" Armstrong exclaimed in a jocose tone, as the two rejoined him.

"Yes, our business was not of a lengthy nature," Duffit dryly answered.

"Just so," Revere acquiesced. "But good-day, gentlemen, I must be off."

"Hold on there," Armstrong replied, "what's the hurry? Come up to my rooms and have something before you go down to that beastly old office of yours. Duffit and I were just crossing the park to take a bite together. Come along."

"I thank you very much," Revere answered, "but I really haven't the time."

"Humph, that's the eternal cry of the newspaper men—haven't the time. Well, so be it, if you absolutely refuse. But look here, I'm going to have a little blow-out in my rooms next Wednesday. Will you come up? Almost everybody will be there. Lots of pretty girls, you know—jolly company and all that."

"I hardly think"—Revere began.

"Hardly think be d—d!" Armstrong exclaimed. "You needn't be afraid to come; I'm not in West Twenty-eighth Street any longer. I'm right here uptown, and there's no fear of interference. Say the word, man, and come and have a good time."

"Some other time I shall be pleased to come, Mr. Armstrong, but I must be excused

this time," Revere answered, and bidding the friends good-by, hurried off.

"D— it, it's enough to raise any fellow's bile," Armstrong exclaimed as he turned to Duffit, "there's that fellow refusing an invitation that most fellows in town would jump at quicker than scat."

"I know it," Duffit answered. "You don't know the fellow yet; he's a deep one, he is. But I'll catch him yet, you see if I don't."

"Hope you do, Duffit," Armstrong vehemently exclaimed. "D—n it, I'd just like to see him taught some manners!"

"Never fear," Duffit lightly replied, "we'll do it yet."

CHAPTER IX.

SWEET ALICE.

HAVING conceived an active liking for Revere, O'Tear missed no opportunity of strengthening the bond of friendship with him. He seemed to be anxious to make amends for his previous inclination to join in the general ridicule of the new arrival, and finding, upon closer acquaintance, that Revere was a man after his own heart, avowed the fact to him openly and demonstrated it in many different ways.

It now became quite a customary thing for Revere and O'Tear to go out together on those aimless rambles about the city that are so dear to the Bohemian heart. "East Side, West Side, all around the town," as the song hath it, they wandered, sometimes in daytime, sometimes at night, observing, discussing and

commenting. O'Tear knew everything and everybody. Now he would point out celebrities of local and national renown as they paced up and down Broadway, and then the squalid headquarters of some notorious crew of "crooks" in the heart of the slums would be the subject of a glowing description. Fifth Avenue or Mott Street, First Avenue and Sixth, were as one to him, and any number of personal adventures entered into his descriptions.

It happened, then, that while they were walking down the Bowery one evening, O'Tear describing the interiors of some of the "dives" they were passing, the talk gradually shifted to the general corruption of the city.

"Holy Gee, man," O'Tear said, "what d'ye expect? It's all in a knot, an' Tamm'ny's at th' head o' it. There ain't one o' these 'ere folks but what pays cash down fer every racket an' everybody knows it, too. An' if ye wants t' know what keeps 'em t'gether, I'll tell ye. It's th' choich."

"The church?" Revere inquired in an incredulous tone.

"That's what—the Roman Cath'lic choich," O'Tear replied.

“How?”

“O, dey’s all in it. It’s a tough t’ing, dat’s what, see? It’s all in de gang.”

Revere laughed.

“I am afraid you are somewhat prejudiced, O’Tear,” he said, “are you not?”

“Prej’diced? An’ why in h—I shouldn’t I be? Ain’t th’ Cath’lic choich broke me whole life?”

Revere looked at him in surprise.

“Yes, cully,” O’Tear went on with a bitter little laugh, “dat’s what. If it hadn’t ’a been fer th’ Cath’lic choich I wudn’t be the bum I am now. Say,” he continued, his English becoming purer and purer as he became more excited, “d’ye know who Jim O’Tear oncet wuz? Oncet ’pon a time ye cudn’t mention Jim O’Tear’s name but what people ’d say—there’s a young man as ’ll make his mark some day. Say, dey wuzn’t a better scene painter nor a higher priced pen-and-ink-man in the profession than Jim O’Tear once.

“I just tell you, I used to be a regular swell, those days. I was twenty-two years old and away up in the world.

“The boys say there’s mystery in me life.

Well, there is, for a fact. But it isn't much of a mystery, after all. It's just the same old story over again. Look here, old chap, would you like to hear the story through? It'll do me good to tell it, for, somehow or other, I feel choked as I think of it to-night, and it just seems as though it'll relieve me to have a chap like you hear it. Come into this gin-mill here, and let me take a bracer or two, and then we'll go at it."

"No, no," Revere answered, "let the bracer go, old man. Let's walk along."

"All right, have your way, then. I'll tell you the whole story from the beginning," O'Tear replied.

"You see," he began, "as I told you before, there wasn't a chap in town in it with me fifteen years ago. I'm an old man now; pretty soon I'll be forty, and these hairs of mine, which are just turning gray, will probably never see the day that I'm forty-five. But fifteen years ago I was as bright and likely a youngster as ever drew a line. Everything came my way. I was wanted by every illustrated paper in the country, and my scenic pieces fetched some steep prices, I can tell

you. In those days I never drank, either, nor indulged in any other excesses that I could be ashamed of. I was all devotion to my work and—Alice!

“She was a slight, tall girl, with the most beautiful flaxen hair and clear blue eyes, a real angel on earth, was Alice Deane. Ah, my boy, how happy I used to be those days when I’d stroll down Broadway on a sunny day, with Alice on my arm and people turning around and looking after us, and saying: ‘There goes that young artist and his sweet-heart,’ for everyone knew me in those times. No work was too hard for me then, and why? Because I was working for my little wife that was to be. Was I tired, or uneasy, or restless, or in want of ideas? A glance into my Alice’s eyes and I was rested and strong and healthy and full of new conceptions.

“Of course, there was another side to the story. Alice’s people were Catholics and didn’t look upon the match with favor from the first, because I, don’t you know, was descended from Protestant Irishmen. But as there had been no occasion for an open rupture, everything seemed to move along well and I

was busy furnishing a little home for my darling.

“One day, though, old man Deane and I met in a restaurant and got to talking about future prospects.

“ ‘By the way,’ says he, ‘what are you going to do about the children’s religion when they come?’

“ ‘Why,’ says I, ‘they’ll be what their father is.’

“Then down he brought his fist on the table with a bang, and, ‘I’ll see you in h—l before I’ll allow that,’ says he.

“ ‘Why, what would you have?’ asked I.

“ ‘Half the children Catholic and half your way.’

“ ‘No,’ said I, ‘I’ll tell you what, though, I’ll let you have the girls Catholic and I’ll keep the boys Protestant.’

“ ‘But no, ’twas no use. ‘Half in half,’ said he, and nothing else would do. Then, seeing ’twas a case of pure obstinacy, I got on my ear too, and told him I’d see him d—d before I’d let any of the boys be Catholics, and then he up and cried out that I’d cursed him and he wouldn’t have me come near his house and

daughter again, and I laughed at him, and so we parted.

“The next day, of course, I went to see Alice. But 'twas no use. ‘Nobody at home, sir,’ said the servant. Same story next day, too, and the day after that. The fourth day I caught sight of Alice in a horse-car, and I chased it several blocks till I got aboard. Well, I had her get off and walk around with me, and I told her that the best thing we could do was to go and get married right away and let the old folks slide. Then she got to crying and told me how sorry she was I had quarreled with her papa, and how her papa had sworn he’d curse her forever if she had anything to do with me, and she asked me to make my peace with him. So I told her not to cry, but to meet me the day after in the park, and I’d try to arrange it with the old man.

“Down I sat, then, and wrote a letter to Deane, begging his pardon for offending him, and telling him that I’d let him have his own way about the matter, and asking him to accept the olive branch, don’t you know. But it wasn’t the least bit of use. Back came the answer, the next day, that I had cursed him

and his church, and he wouldn't allow his daughter to come near me if I were a king. I saw Alice the next day and showed her the letter, and urged her to do as I wanted, and she cried again and swore she loved me more than all the world, but she could never live with a curse on her soul from her father, and then she begged me to try again.

"So I tried again, and wrote another letter, telling him I'd let all the children be Catholic, and asking him not to break two hearts, and all that, but he answered that he didn't give a d—n about the children, because there weren't going to be any children!

"I then determined to see him personally, but he wouldn't allow me to come into his office. Then I got mad and knocked the porter down and walked in and gave the old man a piece of my mind.

"So when I met Alice in the park again I told her what had happened and begged her on my knees to marry me at once. But no, she wouldn't be cursed by her father and mother, for her mother was dead set against me, too; you know women are the worst on religion—and then I told her she didn't love me, and

she swore she did love me more than any one else, but she feared for her soul. So I cried out, 'Soul be d—d,' and she looked so pained I begged her forgiveness on the spot, and she smiled through her tears and told me I was a naughty boy. Then I begged her again not to ruin both of our lives, but to become my wife. But 'twas no use, she was afraid of the church, and she swore she would never marry any other man but she couldn't marry me.

"So we parted, and I couldn't do my work well, and got to taking an occasional cocktail as a bracer, but I got notes from her now and then saying that her parents wanted her to marry some fat old contractor or other, and she wouldn't do it, of course. Then, one day, I got a note from her saying that her father had sworn she'd either marry the contractor or go to a convent, and almost immediately after followed another, informing me that she was writing it while preparing to go off to become a nun, because she had told her father up and down that she wouldn't be anybody's wife but mine, and had told the contractor that he showed himself no gentleman in persecuting her the way he did.

“Well, when I realized that she was off to a convent, I just nearly went crazy. I threw my palette down on the floor and put on my hat and coat and went and drew my money at the bank—and a good stiff sum it was, too—and I left the furniture I had bought just where it was, in the flat, paying a year’s rent in advance—and then I went off on a drunk.

“It was eleven months before I became sober again. During that time I had been to South America, and Australia, and the old continent and England and the Lord only knows where else. I became sober only because I didn’t have a cent left to buy a drink with. I fell sick and had a narrow escape from delirium tremens, the doctors said, until, one day, I came out of the hospital in Paris without a sou to my name.

“Well, sir, I looked in the glass and couldn’t recognize myself. Where I had been a youngster with a fresh rosy face and bright eyes, I now resembled a man of sixty, with deep sunken eyes, and the hangdog expression of a lifelong bum.

“So I worked my way back to New York on a cattle steamer, and came to my friends and

asked for work, and was given it. But Lord—my hand was no more like my own than if it had been a dog's paw. The pictures I drew were more like a schoolboy's scrawls than an artist's productions. Besides, I couldn't work three consecutive days at a time. The liquor demon was in me, and I could no more resist him than I could have restrained the winds. So I went on, working one day and boozing two, until my friends slowly dropped off, one by one, and I was left all alone—as I am now. But I always paid the rent of that flat-full of furniture, somehow or other, and once every year I have it thoroughly gone through. The years have been long in passing, my boy, and it seems a century since I saw Alice last. I don't know what has become of her, and I am afraid to try to find out. During the first two years or so I used to see old Deane on the street, but he never would recognize me at all. But he faded rapidly, too, and I could see him waste away, until one day I read he was dead.

Then I fell sick again and couldn't go to the funeral, where I might have seen Alice. I read about Mrs. Deane's death several months later while I was in Denver.

“So, you see, my boy, here I am to-day, as hard a drinker as there is in the city, alone and friendless, and withal the man who is known in the office and among the boys in general as ‘the jolly O’Tear.’ ”

Revere’s eyes were moist as he pressed O’Tear’s hand, but he said nothing.

CHAPTER X.

A KISS AT AUCTION.

A GAY assemblage crowded Armstrong's rooms. The night of the promised supper had come and a choice coterie was enjoying the hospitality of the urbane host and Miss Lilian Degraw—Lily for short.

Duffit and Perry were there, together with a party of Yale students, as well as several other congenial spirits. As for the female part of the aggregation—there was the usual assortment of "Roses" and "Violets" and "Pearls" and "Goldies" and the other stock names dear to the heart of the nymph of the pleasure world.

Duffit was supremely happy. He was in his element and wished everyone to know it. He made violent love to every girl in turn, and having run through the list, began over again. He was out for a "good time," and to judge

by the frequency with which he loudly declared the fact, seemed anxious to impress it upon all present.

Perry, on the other hand, having little of that self-assurance which must figure largely in the make-up of the successful man-about-town, devoted himself assiduously to a little fairy with black eyelashes and golden hair, who, to judge from the weary aspect of her face, would rather have been anywhere else in the cold, cold world, than in his immediate vicinity.

Armstrong himself appeared ill at ease. Lily had proven a hard nut to crack that day. She had insisted upon having full charge of all the invitations, and had decided that six hundred dollars were necessary to cover the cost of the evening's entertainment.

"Good Lord, Lil," he had remonstrated, "isn't a hundred generally more than enough?"

"Well," she had answered, "if you think you can't afford it, don't have the affair come off, that's all."

And of course, he had yielded; a man always does under such circumstances.

Now Lily had come in and calmly deposited herself in a corner, from which she was quizzically surveying the party, making no endeavor to either welcome or entertain her guests.

The chill of the reception soon began to tell on the revelers. The Yale boys vowed to one another that things were "dead slow," the Roses and Pearls made semi-audible comments on the "stuck-up-ness" of the hostess, and Duffit finally felt concerned enough to ask his friend what the matter was.

"I don't know," Armstrong wearily answered. "She's been that way off and on for the last couple of months or so. No more life in her than in a piece of wood, unless it's when she wants money. Lord! How she can go it then, though! There's been the devil to pay during the last week or so. It's money, money, money, all day long. Whatever she does with it—Ugh!"

Duffit looked interested.

"By the way," he said, "you never told me where you came across her. How did you come to take her? Did you get her from home?"

"No," Armstrong replied, "not by a d—d

sight. I took a girl from home once and I'll be d—d if I ever do it again. Gad! I've never got over it yet. Poor thing!—I wonder what's become of her——”

“Well,” Duffit persisted, “where did you get her from?”

“Why, I picked her up in Baltimore. She was living alone at the time, you know—had been in the swell set—broken with five or six men—some said a dozen, when I met her. I was hard struck, at first sight.”

“Don't blame you,” Duffit interrupted, glancing at Lily.

“So,” Armstrong went on, “I proposed, was accepted, and here we are. She was all right enough at first—regular jewel, and all that; but lately it's been as much as my life has been worth to talk to her above a whisper, so to speak. But, gad, I love her more now than ever I did. That's the way it is, you know. There she sits now, as cool as a cucumber, and the Lord only knows what she's thinking about.”

“Well, I'll tell you what,” Duffit answered, “she's a beauty, and no mistake. George,

man, what a figure, what a face! You're in luck!"

"Yes, but the money——"

"Money be blowed. If you weren't my friend I'd try to cut you out and put up all the money she'd ask for—that's what!"

Armstrong smiled.

"Wait till you've had some experience with a woman like her," he said, and strolled off to look after the comfort of his young academic friends.

Duffit, having begun thinking about Lily, soon convinced himself that he was deeply in love with the young lady.

Accordingly he decided to brave the frigidity of her demeanor and approached her.

"Rather cool evening, Miss Degraw," he began.

"Rather," she answered, industriously studying the pattern of the rug at her feet.

"You look bored," Duffit questioned.

"You think so?"

"I should judge so. Are you not feeling well?"

"Quite well, thank you."

Her coolness irritated Duffit.

"I don't suppose you like crowds, do you?" he asked.

"Sometimes," was her non-committal answer.

"Do you like this crowd?"

"Oh, yes."

"You are not enjoying yourself?"

"Oh, yes."

"Do you like New York?"

"Oh, yes."

Duffit was desperate.

"Do you always act this way?" he finally asked.

"Which way?" she naïvely queried in return.

"Why, so abstractedly."

"Oh, sometimes."

"What a divine creature," Duffit said to himself. "I wonder if I could get her away from Armstrong?"

"Miss Degraw, you are not candid with me—why do you act so coldly," he asked in a low voice.

"Pardon me, what is your name, now?" she suddenly inquired.

"Duffit."

"Oh, yes, Mr. Duffit—well, I am quite candid with you, I may assure you."

Duffit saw it was useless to attack indirectly, and changed his method.

"Miss Degraw," he said, "does it ever strike you that you are too divine a creature to be shut up in this manner? Does it ever strike you that you ought to be in the world, flying hither and thither, seeing lands, traveling——"

"I intend to travel some day," she answered simply.

"With whom? Armstrong?"

"Possibly."

"Miss Degraw!" Duffit exclaimed, hardly containing himself, "will you not take me into your conservatory and show me your flowers? I understand you are quite fond of them."

Lily rose.

"Certainly, if you insist, Mr. Duffit," she replied, "this way."

An adjoining door led them into the hall, and in a few moments Lily was discoursing on the virtues of her various favorites, Duffit, meanwhile simulating great interest, but really watching with hungry eyes the girl's superb figure and ravishing face.

"Ah, Miss Degraw," he finally exclaimed, "could you but know how beautiful you are, you would indeed be proud that you are yourself."

She smiled at the blunt compliment.

"Miss Degraw," he went on, drawing nearer to her, "could anything ever induce you to leave Armstrong?"

"What do you mean?" she calmly asked.

"You do not love him?"

"If I did not like him I should not be here."

"But you do not love him?"

"Why do you think so?"

"Because, Miss Degraw," he burst out, "you are not treated rightly, are you?"

"How?"

"He is not generous. I could—I would be!"

A scornful smile played about her lips.

"You are trying to steal your friend's mistress," she said.

"Mistress? Friend?" he exclaimed.

"Forget the first, do not think of the second word. I would make you my idol—you are adorable, you are an angel—come to me and be my queen!"

"You are raving, as men always do in such circumstances," she answered.

"I am not raving! Why, for one kiss from your lips I'd pawn my soul!"

"Easier said than done."

"No, I am not exaggerating! Come," he passionately cried, clasping her hand, "give me one kiss and exact your own price."

"Nonsense, Mr. Duffit," she replied, "you are beside yourself."

"I am, because I would be away from myself and with you," he answered, restraining her hand in spite of her endeavors to draw it away.

With a sudden movement she freed herself. Duffit bit his lip and controlled himself somewhat.

"Come, Miss Degraw," he began in a joking tone, "let us strike a bargain."

"A bargain?"

"A trade then."

"The merchandise?"

"A kiss."

"What do you mean?"

"Sell me one."

"What——"

"Just one kiss. Let me bid for it in dollars and cents."

She curled her lip.

"You have much faith in the power of money," she said.

"But more in your kindness of heart. Come, I am fairly starving for it. Will you not sell a hungry man food?"

"You mean dessert?"

"So be it, then. For the dessert, I bid——"

"It is not for sale."

"But everything is always open to a good offer. Come then, what say you to a hundred dollars?"

She seemed about to leave the room. He was rapidly losing his self-control.

"Come, then," he cried again, "will not two hundred tempt you—nor three hundred?"

"No, no—" she began.

"Then four hundred—come one kiss—four hundred dollars."

"No, no," she said, but slower, as if hesitating, her eyes downcast, and the color suffusing her cheeks.

"How much, then—what will tempt you?"

he said. "Five hundred for one kiss? There, am I not generous—one kiss from your lips—five hundred dollars!"

He was almost delirious now, as he drew her to himself. She resisted; she seemed to be thinking, thinking, thinking— Now he had drawn her to him, now his arm encircled her waist. Still she made no sign. His arms were around her now.

"Darling," he murmured; his breath fanned her cheeks; his lips touched hers——

She started, as if an electric shock had struck her. Her head flew back from his— she struggled to get free. But he was now frantic.

"One more kiss," he hoarsely whispered, "one more—I must have one more——"

"Let go," she panted, struggling with might and main, but helpless in his powerful grasp, "let go, I say!"

"One more kiss!" he insisted.

"Let go!" she almost screamed.

"Yes, let go!" Armstrong's voice sounded from the doorway.

Duffit came to his senses on the instant. His arms fell to his sides.

“What does this mean, Duffit?” Armstrong sternly interrogated.

Lily glanced at him and saw that he would try to exculpate himself.

“It means,” she quickly interposed, “that your friend tried to kiss me, and I prevented him.”

Armstrong frowned and looked at Duffit menacingly.

“I don’t think we shall need you any more to-night, Duffit,” he said.

Duffit understood. He bowed and walked out of the conservatory, while Lily sank back upon a convenient stool.

“Come, Lily,” Armstrong kindly said, “let us go back to our guests.”

Lily took his arm.

In the parlors Duffit’s sudden exit with his fair partner occasioned a little talk, but the incident was forgotten in the general hilarity, especially as Lily, apparently anxious to atone for her former delinquency, was now the personification of amiability and good nature. Under her fostering care, the Yale youths became positive fountains of joy, and before long the party was in a state of merriment

highly satisfactory to the generous heart of the host.

"Lil," he said, "you're a brick, when you want to be one, why can't you always be the same?"

"Because I might become hardened if I were," she answered; and Armstrong went into ecstasies over her wit.

The influences of the hour had so far emboldened Perry that he was now telling funny stories about the office he had "lately left, because it was too dead slow, don't you know." His heh-heh-heh sounded again and again as he vividly portrayed certain incidents which, unfortunately for his veracity, instead of actually occurring with him as their hero were simply more or less realistic descriptions of affairs which had come to pass with him as their victim. He spread himself, especially on the recital of the punishment he had inflicted on a "Western chap called Revere," until Armstrong, being well acquainted with the story, felt compelled to ask him if he hadn't got the main facts slightly confused. Upon which the company, catching their cue from the dismayed look upon Perry's face as well as

from their host's disdainful tone, burst out guffawing most unmercifully.

To conclude the festivity, the Yale boys pressed their host and hostess to accept an invitation to that time-honored yearly New Haven frolic known as the "O. G. B.," and Lily acquiescing under pressure, the matter was arranged, and everyone left, vowing that it had been the finest kind of a racket; the Yale boys emphasizing the fact by assuring Armstrong and Lily that they were both "smooth, b' George."

The next day Lily received a check for five hundred dollars. It bore Duffit's signature.

CHAPTER XI.

A FLAME KINDLED.

MISS MARIA ANN 'OVERLEY was an extraordinary woman. She confessed the fact at every available opportunity, and gloried in the distinction with much noise and assertion.

Tall, thin, and—to her mind—commanding, she prided herself on possessing none of those femininities which men are foolish enough to regard as the chief charms of woman.

Miss Overley's special mission was to have "experiences" which she afterward described in flowery language, covering many columns, for the delectation of the amazed readers of the "Sunday supplement." In other words, she was the star reporter of the Sunday edition, and the one great aim of her life was to outdo a certain enterprising young woman who had succeeded by hard work in putting herself at

the head of the active woman "journalists" of the city. For some reason or other, however, she could never really attain her aim, although she faithfully duplicated every move of the above mentioned young lady, from two weeks to three years after it had been made by the latter.

Such was the woman who awoke one morning to the disagreeable realization that she could no longer claim the distinction of being the "sole woman member of the staff."

Miss Overley, therefore, at once started out to investigate the new arrival. From behind the cover of a newspaper held before her eyes she furtively studied Miss Duval for the space of forty-five or more minutes, and assuming the prerogatives of both judge and jury, returned the verdict of "guilty: in the first degree."

Primarily, Miss Maria Ann Overley did not like Miss Duval because the latter young lady did not come up to her æsthetic conception of the "new woman."

"She is too feminine," Miss Overley said to herself, and being entirely satisfied with the decision, walked over to the unconscious victim

of her scrutiny and introduced herself as "M. A. Overley."

Miss Duval was, of course, perfectly delighted to meet Miss Overley. Miss Overley, on the other hand, was "glad to know" Miss Duval.

"How long are you going to stay here?" Miss Overley curtly inquired.

The artiste looked astonished.

"Wh—why, I hope for some time—I——"

"Oh, I know," Miss Overley impatiently interrupted, "you know, women don't stay long here. They are too feminine and don't do the work well. Women require too much sympathy to get along well in a newspaper office, you know. Of course, I've been here a long while, ever since the paper started, almost, but women in general can't stand the work. It takes an extraordinary woman, you know.""

Miss Duval, who had at first been quite overcome by the torrent of instruction and information, caught her clew at the last sentence.

"Oh, yes, I see," she answered, smiling, "it takes a woman of great talent to stay here long?"

"Exactly," Miss Overlay complacently answered.

"How fortunate they are in having you here!" Miss Duval innocently remarked.

"As for that, I suppose there are some others who could do as well," Miss Overlay modestly admitted, "but the work is very exacting. Let's see, you draw pictures, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Well then, I hope you will do good work. I hate to see a woman come in here and score a failure. That's why I try to keep other women out of here. So very few of them are successful!"

"Indeed?"

"Yes, indeed. It takes a woman with no nonsense, you know; a woman who does not fall in love and all that rot. By the way, you don't believe in love, do you?"

"Certainly not," was the demure answer.

"That's right. You know, the woman who succeeds is the one who can hold her own with any man. It is a woman who can swear when swearing is necessary, who can smoke a cigar or play poker, or climb a tree, or run a race,

just like a man. I hate a woman who is afraid of a rough word!"

"Indeed," Miss Duval rejoined, in the most ingenuous manner. "I am very glad I am not afraid of such things."

"I thought otherwise," Miss M. A. Overlay replied. "I hope I was mistaken. The work here is just as hard as the devil ever could make it. Do you think you can stand it?"

"I hope so."

"Hope—fiddlesticks. If you can't, you had better leave right away. Don't expect any sympathy from *me*."

"I couldn't think of it," Miss Duval assured her.

"That's right. As soon as you get used to your surroundings, you must come and join some of the clubs I belong to."

"Clubs?" Miss Duval wonderingly inquired.

"Yes, clubs. That's what I said. They're not men's clubs, although I've tried to get into two or three. These are women's clubs."

"What are they, please?"

"Don't 'please' me. I don't like it! As for the clubs, we have all sorts. There are philosophical clubs and advancement clubs and

craft clubs. Of course, they all come to the same thing in the end. We meet and discuss things and adopt resolutions. None of your namby-pamby resolutions that men make, you know, but straight-from-the-shoulder, outright resolutions that make first-class reporting. Then we read papers and these fill up space wonderfully. Then, once in awhile we make excursions to the slums and study the poor."

"What do you do that for?"

"Why, we adopt resolutions about them afterward. Don't you see? Then we try to pass bills about them in the Legislature. I have a bill up at Albany now. It's about marriage restrictions and provides that no man not having an income of twelve hundred dollars per year shall be allowed to marry. Good bill—that, eh?"

"I suppose so, still——"

"No still about it! It's an A-number-one bill, that's what it is. Why, see how it will reduce those miserable marriages——"

"Yet," Sophie Duval could not help interposing, "God chose a poor carpenter as the protector of Christ."

"Ah—there you go. Don't ever talk religion to me again! That's all rot, see? Bosh! These marriages of the poor must be stopped, and the bill is a lovely one—I mean"—she hastened to correct the feminine description, "a damned good one; do you see?"

"I suppose so," Miss Duval wearily replied.

"Do you? All right. I'll see you again. I want to speak to Mr. Timbers. There he is at his desk now. If you stay here long, I'll see that you get into my clubs."

"Thank you."

"Don't mention it."

And off trotted Miss Maria Ann.

Timbers nodded quite pleasantly at Miss Overley.

"How do, Overley?" was his jovial greeting.

"How do, Mr. Timbers. Anything for me to-day?"

"Mm—yes. There's some society work I'd like to have you do."

"Society work? I object, Mr. Timbers. Any man could do that. Can't you send me out on something thrilling?"

"Not this week. Mr. Duffit is engineering a story which you can work quite well."

“But——”

“Rot! The girl around the corner is doing society work, too.”

“Is she? Well, then, I’ll be hanged if I won’t do it, too! I can outdo her at anything, hands down, any time!”

“Of course you can, Miss Overley. Now, I’ll just turn you over to Mr. Duffit.”

Mr. Duffit being called and instructed to divide his work with the “lady,” he immediately exerted himself to make things pleasant for her. But, alas, Miss Overley would have none of it! “Rot!” she cried, “get to work!”

But Mr. Duffit was not to be overcome quite so easily. He asked Miss Overley where she bought her toilet soap, her complexion was so charming.

After half an hour’s skirmishing—

“Has it ever struck you, Miss Overley,” he suddenly exclaimed, “that your profile is a most perfect one of the classic type?”

Miss Overley actually blushed.

“I don’t know but what you’re right,” she modestly acquiesced.

Duffit was delighted.

“It certainly is,” he affirmed. “You ought

to have some photographs taken of it. It is most unusual. Such beauty is very rare, you know——”

“Rot!” Miss Overley exclaimed, playfully pushing him away from her. “I’ll look into it, however.” Then she plunged into work.

But the mischief was done. From that day on Duffit regarded Miss Overley as his legitimate prey and prosecuted the line of flattery to its utmost limit. He went into raptures over her gowns, he adored her bonnets, he worshiped her hair, he marveled at her figure. Miss Overley, on the other hand, was slowly but surely becoming convinced that she had hitherto woefully neglected her physical self. She assured herself that she could carry away the palm in any beauty contest, and as ample proof of the same, exhibited multifarious photographs of her countenance, which the art of the operator had transformed into likenesses of most divine originals.

In short, Mr. Duffit succeeded in doing that which it seemed hardly possible for any man to have done: he turned Miss Overley’s head.

And now, witness a most unexpected spectacle; the growth of jealousy on the part of

Timbers. Alarmed at the sudden intimacy between Duffit and Miss Overley, he paused in dismay and tried to analyze his own feelings on the subject. Already Miss Overley's work was not what it was wont to be. The pronoun "I," which had previously been sufficiently conspicuous in her "copy," had now become almost continuous. Now there came little snatches of: "By the exercise of all the wiles familiar to a beautiful woman, however, I induced him to," etc.

Mr. Timbers groaned in despair.

"Overley," said he at the first opportunity, "I have something important to speak to you about."

"At your service," she answered.

"Overley, I must come right to the point," he began, and stopped.

"Well?"

"Overley, you—you—are—are—are *not* beautiful!"

She gasped.

"Sir!" she exclaimed.

"I mean it!" he insisted.

"I don't see"—she began.

"And I do!" he answered, braver now that

the worst was out. "Overley, if you continue imagining that you are beautiful, you will be unable to do any work here."

"You mean——"

"I mean just what I say. You can't work here with any such thoughts buzzing under your bonnet. You are positively a plain woman, and any one that says otherwise is a liar!"

"But Mr. Duffit"—she tearfully began.

"Mr. Duffit is a liar," he answered. "I hope that is quite plain!"

Thirty minutes later Miss Overley was pouring her tale of woe into Mr. Duffit's sympathetic ear. The latter individual assured her that she was a much maligned woman, and that Mr. Timbers was a disagreeable old idiot, who wouldn't know a Venus from a broomstick. Upon which Miss Overley brightened up wonderfully, and, much to his satisfaction, informed Mr. Duffit that he was "a gentleman, worthy of being a member of any woman's club, if men were admitted."

After the pacified journaliste had taken her way into the outer world, Duffit lounged up to Timbers' desk.

"Say, Timbers, old man," he drawled, "did you tell Overley that I lied when I asserted that she was a Juno reincarnated?"

"I did," Timbers answered, an ominous glitter lighting his eye.

"And did you mean it?" Duffit asked, in the same nonchalant tone.

"I did."

"Well, then, my dear boy, let me congratulate you. You are the most discerning man under the sun!"

Timbers was staggered.

"Well, I'll be d—d!" he gasped.

CHAPTER XII.

CHECK!

A CERTAIN class of human beings exists whose special mission on earth seems to be, not to enjoy its own possessions, but to envy the possessions of others. It is to this category that Buffit could rightly claim allegiance.

Having seen his little plot regarding Revere and Miss Duval go to the winds before it had had time to draw the first breath of life, he kept under cover and waited for a favorable opportunity to strike at Revere and Sophie again.

The sudden developments in the case of Miss Overlay furnished him the desired chance.

"What think you, Miss Duval," he pleasantly inquired one day, "of our friend Miss Overlay?"

"She is a very nice woman," was the artiste's noncommittal reply.

"But," Duffit persisted, ignoring the cold tone, "don't you think she is rather peculiar?"

"Do you think so?"

"Most men do. Don't you?"

"I would not pit my opinion against yours."

"Sharp as a steel blade!" Duffit thought to himself.

"You must agree that she is somewhat out of the ordinary?" he said aloud.

"She is an extraordinary woman, certainly," was the adroit answer.

Duffit bit his lip.

"Do you not think her ideas are rather peculiar?" he asked.

"How?"

"Why, in general. Her ideas on woman, for instance."

"How?" she repeated. Duffit saw himself being slowly but surely drawn into playing the part he intended Miss Duval to play, but there was no way of getting out of the pit he had dug.

"Do you not think her a little too masculine?" he asked.

"Do you?"

"Somewhat; we all do, don't you know. Not that we think she really believes in it herself. We are inclined to think that it is more or less of a mask she finds it convenient to put on and wear for our delectation. What think you?"

"I really have not known Miss Overley long enough to judge."

"But from your brief acquaintance?"

"One could not well judge. I should say, however, that Miss Overley is a woman of unlimited capabilities and possessed of a good deal of human nature?"

"Perhaps you are right," he hastened to retrench. "Still," he continued, "there is a good deal of hypocrisy, it seems to me, in people who hold to one set line of views."

She wondered what he was driving at.

"Indeed?" she queried.

"Yes. I do not think that any of us are either perfect or resolute enough to always adhere to one system of action. People who profess that they are, it seems to me, are impostors, more or less."

"In what way?"

"Well, take a man who holds that a certain

moral standard is the only one to keep. I do not believe that he really adheres to it himself."

"You allude to——"

"Our friend Mr. Revere? Yes. I have told him so personally, many a time."

"Indeed" she replied, a slight flush of anger showing on her face, "then perhaps you would just as lief tell it to Mr. Revere now. I see he has just come in."

Duffit colored slightly as he followed the direction of her eyes. Revere happening to glance in their direction at the moment, their eyes met. He hesitated and then, discerning a beckoning look in Miss Duval's eyes, approached.

"Good-afternoon, Miss Duval," and "how do you do, Duffit," he greeted the two.

Duffit nodded.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Revere," Miss Duval answered, her cheeks still glowing, "we were just talking about you."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; Mr. Duffit," Miss Duval announced, her eyes gleaming with anger, "has just been

kind enough to assure me that you were a hypocrite!"

Duffit actually took a step backward at the blow. He had never expected her to say quite as much as she had. But Revere understood the honest nature of the girl, and while astonished he was by no means astounded by her conduct.

"It was very kind of Mr. Duffit," he curtly remarked.

Duffit chewed his mustache.

"I—I say"—he began.

"You have said enough, it seems to me, Duffit," Revere interrupted.

"But really—I never——"

"Do you mean to accuse Miss Duval of an untruth?" Revere almost thundered.

Several of the men raised their heads from their work. Miss Duval sat bolt upright in her chair, her face as expressionless as if it were chiseled of marble.

"Not at all," Duffit stammered, "really, my dear boy, you jump at—at conclusions, don't you know—I—I was only saying that, don't you know, principles, I didn't—principles, didn't believe in avowals of ideas, of—of set

principles in—in ideas, in morals, in—in that is to say, in men that don't do what they—that is—don't you know——”

Here Duffit came to a dead stop.

“Well?” Revere calmly asked.

Duffit shifted uneasily from one foot to another.

“Duffit,” Revere quietly said, “don't you think we can settle this affair somewhere else?”

“Why?” Duffit answered, not at all relishing the prospect of having the matter brought up again, “I really don't see that there is anything to settle. I didn't mean to speak of you in any disparaging way, in the first place, and Miss Duval entirely——”

“Leave Miss Duval out,” Revere sternly exclaimed.

“Well, then,” Duffit continued, resting alternately upon one foot and the other, and his face now paling and now crimsoning, “I may assure you that I didn't mean to insinuate anything, merely a slip of the tongue, don't you know—no harm meant.”

“By which I understand that you apologize?”

“N—n—y—yes; I suppose so.”

“Very well. That ends the matter. Good-day, Miss Duval,” and Revere stalked off.

Duffit remained behind a moment, not knowing exactly what to do. But when he looked down, Miss Duval was absorbed in her work. Giving his mustache an extra hard pull, he shuffled off.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN ASSIGNMENT.

MR. TIMBERS felt that he had a duty to perform, and when Mr. Timbers had such a feeling he never rested until he had discharged his obligation.

"Revere," said he, the very next day after the encounter between that young man and Duffit, "there is something I wish to speak to you about particularly."

"Yes, sir. What is it?" Revere inquired.

"It's about that confounded temper of yours."

Revere bit his lip.

"It isn't that I want to make a kick, or cause you any unpleasantness," Timbers continued in a kind tone, "but you really must learn to restrain yourself. You know you hold the record for scraps here already, and you simply must stop."

"But"—Revere began.

"I know—I know," Timbers interrupted, "you have had sufficient provocation and all that, but there's been too much of it."

"It has not been of my seeking."

"Probably not. But with all that, you have been too ready to take offense."

Revere remained silent a moment.

"Look here, Mr. Timbers," he finally burst out, "has it ever struck you that all my trouble has been with just two men—one of them, Perry, a coward and sneak of the meanest type, and the other, Duffit, a man who bids fair to follow faithfully in his comrade's footsteps?"

Timbers scratched his nose.

"Well," he drawled, "I suppose you're right."

"Very well, then, do you blame me?"

"Not exactly. I must admit that I was pretty glad to see Perry go. As for Duffit, the least said about him the better. He's been raising the very old cat of a racket here with Overley, and I don't see what I can do with him, either. He's a good enough worker, but he's fuller of tricks than Moses was of piety. What do you think of the Overley affair, anyway?"

Revere shook his head.

"Well, I'll tell you," Timbers continued, entirely forgetting the prime aim of the conversation, now that he was launched on a personal grievance. "I'll tell you. I think that a man who'll play a little game like that is either a damned fool or a damner rascal. Damn it, that's what I think!"

"Had he done anything to Miss Overley?" Revere asked.

"Done?" Timbers almost screamed, "squatting Confucius, why he's spoiled her entirely, the girl isn't worth her salt nowadays. Do you know that she imagines herself the reigning beauty of the world? What do you suppose she said to me the other day? 'Really, Mr. Timbers,' she minced, 'I think that ripe beauty is the most effective. It isn't the beauty of the girl of sixteen that captivates men; it's the mature beauty of the woman of the world.' There! how's that for Miss Maria Ann Overley—eh?"

Revere smiled.

"Oh, it's no joke," the irate chief continued; "it's a damned bad thing! H—, man, do you realize what the breaking down

of an old member of the staff means to me? Confound it, it took me long enough to get the woman trained in the work and now—ugh! Away she goes!”

Timbers was now fairly snorting with rage.

“Well, Mr. Timbers,” Revere smilingly said, “it seems that you do not find yourself any less excitable than I do myself?”

Timbers tried to look severe, but gave it up almost immediately.

“You’ve got me, by God!” he exclaimed, slapping Revere on the back. “I cave! But seriously, now, you’ll have to go slow, you know.”

“I’ll try my best,” Revere answered.

“Very well. Now then, I want to talk to you about a special assignment I have for you. How would you like to go up to New Haven for a night’s work?”

“What is it?”

“It’s an annual blow-out the boys have there. There is generally the devil to pay, and I’m going to spread about it in great shape this year. I guess I’ll let you write it up. Here are the tickets.”

Revere bit his lip.

"Don't you think some of the boys would enjoy the affair more than I should?" he suggested.

Timbers giggled.

"I have no doubt they would," he answered, "and get drunk in the bargain, and send down a lot of trash that won't be worth the trouble of setting. No, sir, you're the man to handle the story, and no one else!"

"Very well, then," Revere answered.

"Just try to make a good story of it—something rich, you know."

"Very well."

Hardly had Revere left the desk when Duffit, who had been hovering around, gazing furtively, now at his chief and now at the young Westerner, made a bee line for Timbers.

"Hello, Timbers," he airily exclaimed, "has the 'wild and woolly' been detailing grievances?"

"No," Timbers curtly replied.

"I thought he might have been," Duffit sententiously remarked.

"Well, you thought wrongly."

"Honest, now," Duffit went on, "I don't know what is the matter with the chap. I

swear, I'd like to be friendly with him, but he just hangs out the danger sign, and there's no approaching him."

"Perhaps you don't know the road," Timbers dryly remarked.

"Perhaps," Duffit jauntily replied. "Do you know it?"

"I think so."

"Will you indicate the royal road?"

"I doubt whether you are able to travel on it."

"Still——"

"Well, then, I'll show it to you."

"*Merci.*"

"Not at all. All you have to do is to act like a gentleman."

Duffit gave a short laugh.

"Thanks for the information," he answered, and turning on his heel, strode off.

"I thought it would be too much for him," Timbers muttered to himself.

CHAPTER XIV.

“SHE’S A REGULAR WITCH!”

DUFFIT would now have preferred to drop Revere and all plans against him for good, but unfortunately for his tardily-acquired wisdom, he had spoken more or less openly about his forthcoming “*coup*” against the “Saint,” and it was impossible for him to back out at that stage of the game with the least show of grace. Beside, the bets he had made with Timbers and O’Tear were no inconsiderable incentive, and the invitations having all gone out, it now remained to get Revere to promise to come to the supper.

So, Duffit, actually profiting by the advice Timbers had given him, approached Revere one morning with the most honest expression on his face he could muster, and extending his hand, asked him to “shake.”

Revere could not refuse, but wondered what Duffit was up to again.

"I'll tell you what it is," the latter individual jovially explained, "I want to make friends with you."

"I am pleased—" Revere began, when Duffit interrupted him.

"I know all that!" he exclaimed, "but I do not want any formalities. Just shake hands on it and cry quits. I have acted more or less like a cad toward you and I'm sorry for it."

Revere could hardly credit his ears.

"I am sure I am delighted to have you—" he began again.

"All right, all right, old man," Duffit interrupted again, "call it square at that. I'm off now, but I want you to remember that there are to be no more scraps between us."

As soon as Duffit had left, Revere walked over to Timbers.

"Pardon me, Mr. Timbers," said he, "will you tell me whether you have had any sort of a talk with Duffit about me recently?"

"Yes," Timbers answered. "Why?"

"I just wanted to know. Can you tell me the particulars?"

"Cert. He wanted to know how to act toward you and I told him."

"What?"

"Told him to act like a gentleman."

Revere laughed.

"Your advice has taken root, I think," he said.

"Get out!" Timbers incredulously exclaimed.

"Fact. He came up to me like a little lord, said he wanted to be friends; was sorry for previous mistakes, and all that."

Timbers grimaced.

"Hope he'll keep it up, that's all," he grumbled.

Meanwhile Duffit was walking down Broadway, chuckling.

"I'll have him now, sure," he said to himself.

At Wall Street he came face to face with Armstrong.

"Hello, old man," the latter exclaimed, "how are things getting along?"

"So, so."

"How's the supper coming on?"

Duffit described the success of his latest plan.

"So it's a sure thing?" Armstrong asked.

"Dead sure. But look here, have you got

over that nasty temper of yours about your girl?"

"Oh, it's all right. I don't blame you a little bit. I swear, she's a regular witch! As I told you before, I don't believe any man could withstand her."

"Well, couldn't you manage to bring her around to the supper?"

"Impossible, man. Neither love nor money could induce her to come. I told her the whole plan, showed her where the fun would be in making a fool of that fellow Revere, but you might just as well have talked to a stone wall."

"Are you sure that a certain amount of dollars couldn't induce her to do it?"

"Dead sure. I tried it, but hungry as she is for money, she wouldn't bite. I wonder, though, what she does with all that money? Hang it! I wouldn't mind its going if I knew where it went."

"Supporting some old hag of a mother, or a grandmother, or cousin, or sister, probably."

"Perhaps—I really can't imagine anything else. By Jove, that must be it! Perhaps she has some sister, whom she is keeping out of

harm's way, or something like that. I'll find out to-night! I'll just tax her with it and see what she has to say. By Jove, if that's the case, I won't begrudge her the last dollar I've got in the world!"

"I don't see that it would help you much if you did begrudge her," Duffit dryly replied, "she'd get it anyway."

Armstrong laughed.

"Perhaps you're right," he answered.

CHAPTER XV.

BACCHUS AND TERPSICHORE.

THERE was joy on Chapel Street in New Haven, and the Yale Campus was filled with immaculately attired striplings, boisterously discussing the prospects of the evening's "tear."

FOR 'twas the night of New Haven's annual "blow-out." That night the sages were to be left in peace by the *jeunesse dorée* of old Eli and Bacchus and Terpsichore were to reign absolute masters both over the hilarious students and the less-learned youths of that portion of the town which, to use the language of the author of the "Commentaries," "is bounded by Congress Avenue on the one side and by the waters of the Long Island Sound on the other, all between being divided into many provinces and inhabited by many nations, chief among whom are the wanderers from the Hibernian part of the Islands of the Britons."

This occasion is the only one on which the proud aristocrats of the University deign to mix with the plebeian inhabitants of the "town" and the latter, seizing the opportunity with no unwilling grasp, manage to express their approbation by various acts of hospitality, which somehow or other generally result in a very sore, and sometimes bleeding "stoodint" finding himself "all by his lonesome" in the darkness of the cool outer world.

Two of the elect were walking down York Street, discussing the coming festivities with no little gusto.

"B' George, dear boy," said one, "have you heard whether that stunner of a girl is coming up to-night—the one we saw at Armstrong's?"

"You mean Lil? Oh, yes, she's here; put up at the New Haven House in great shape, you know."

"Mm—you don't tell me! Well, that's good. Really, old chap, I'm dead stuck on the girl. Do you know, if the guv'nor would put up the necessary cash, I wouldn't mind having her myself. But pshaw, times are too hard nowadays. Guv'nor grudges every copper he hands out."

"Too bad," the other sympathized. " 'Twould take a lot of cash to support a girl like that, though. She's a stunner and no mistake—no Night Owl kicker, you know."

"I s'pose you're right," the first youth sighed. "Anyway," he added with a brighter face, "we'll see her to-night, and if I don't get her to do high jinks my name is not my own, that's all."

The second youth poked his companion in the ribs.

"You're a sly one, you are," he chuckled.

"Oh, I'm no worse than the rest," was the modest answer.

In an entirely different frame of mind, Revere was hastening from the depot, to arrive in time to see the "opening march" of the "mask ball."

Some two hundred couples almost packed the floor as Revere entered the hall. Some of the men were in evening dress and others in grotesque costumes. Chief among these was a stalwart "Indian brave," who moved about the floor with an air of utmost self-confidence. He seemed to know everyone and everyone certainly knew him. For he was the floor manager,

director and bouncer—a man known more for his fistic than Terpsichorean abilities.

The women were the representatives of their class. Only a few of them wore masks, the greater number preferring to have the use of their countenances, such as they were, in pursuit of their game.

Now the band struck up and the “grand march,” started on its tortuous path, soon to break up into a whirlwind of “spieling” couples.

Madder and madder grew the revel as the hours slipped by. The “order of dances,” which had been lavishly distributed at the beginning of the “ball,” became a superfluous quantity. There was now no thought of “waltzes,” “lanciers,” or “polkas.” It was one mad conglomeration of spangled dresses, gayly striped hose, flesh-colored tights and flashing toes, now making their way through the crowns of sleek “stovepipes,” and now flying higher and higher in a mad endeavor at reaching the glass-globed chandeliers overhead.

Totally indisposed to taking part in the mad gayety, Revere paced along the sides of the

hall, seeking distinguishing particulars in the confusing medley. Now he paused near one or another of the "private boxes," where men with flushed faces and glistening eyes were bending over women in little better condition, lavishing caresses, interchanging words of endearment and patting the heavily-painted cheeks. Beer, wine, whisky, followed one another in rapid succession, until all reason was destroyed and the rioting brain produced actions which no ravings of acute mania could match. Callow youths, whose fond mammas and papas opened wide their pursestrings in order that their darlings might not suffer want, pledged their love to women old enough to be their grandmothers, and howled for the waiters to "set 'em up again!"

Now a woman handsomer than the rest might have been seen all alone in a "box" with her partner. A joke, a laugh, a turning away of a man's head, the jeweled white hand travels quickly over the victim's glass, and in a few minutes he lies senseless on the ground, while his paramour courts the freshness of the outer air, leaving him *sans* his watch, chain, money and other valuables.

On Revere passed and from the vantage point of a small flight of steps, leading to an exit, glanced over the crowd.

A cloud of tobacco smoke hung heavily over the heads of the revelers, dimming the unsteady gaslight and lending to the whole picture a weird, infernal aspect. The same flushed faces he had seen before, multiplied over and over again—the same bedizened women, the same suggestiveness, the same flashiness. Hard faces they were, faces which spoke of years of cunning and craft, years of carousal and dissipation, linked with years of want and misery.

As Revere stood there, regarding the scene below, he became conscious of two half-closed eyes, staring at him quizzically. Their owner smiled when he saw he was observed.

"Pardon my staring," he said, approaching Revere, "I saw that you were new to the scene."

Revere smiled in return.

"Rather," he answered.

"I knew it. What do you think of us?"

"Us?"

"Oh, yes, I always call it 'us.' I've seen

this same scene some fifteen or more times in succession. Feel like a part of it, you know."

"You are the proprietor?"

"Not at all. Simply a visitor. I know everyone here. No one knows me. I came here first when I was at college, and I've come here ever since."

"You enjoy it?"

"Hardly. But, there you are! It's the same old story. You come once, and you come again, and you keep on coming. Yes, you keep on," he finished in a low tone, as if speaking to himself.

Revere looked at the man in wonder. This was certainly a character out of the ordinary. He was tall and undeniably handsome. Broad, well-marked features he had, and a small, well-trimmed beard. His dress was immaculate, his bearing that of a gentleman. True, his face had a weary, sallow appearance, and the twinkling gray eyes looked dull and listless when he was not in action; but he was certainly a man of the world, with none of the look of the *habitué* about him.

"Fifteen years?" Revere repeated, "that's a long time."

"Not very, if one passes it the way I have," the stranger answered. "Come and sit down. Perhaps I may serve to do that which this show has not succeeded in doing—amuse you."

Revere followed his new acquaintance. The latter ordered drinks, and watched Revere curiously as he sipped his glass.

"You are foolish, young man," said he.

Revere flushed.

"What do you mean, sir?" he exclaimed.

The stranger held his hand up deprecatingly.

"Do not become excited. Would you believe me if I told you that it is to taking a drink with a stranger the way you did just now, fifteen years ago, that I owe my presence here to-night?"

Revere looked incredulous.

"I don't see"—he began.

"Of course you don't," his companion replied. "It sounds somewhat like a proposition out of the 'Arabian Nights,' does it not? Well, I think I'll celebrate my fifteenth annual appearance here by telling you a little story which may, to use the circus man's formula, 'amuse as well as instruct' you. Do you care to listen?"

“I shall be more than pleased.”

“Very well. I do not know why I talk to you to-night, but I somehow think that it will make me feel easier. So here goes.”

Draining his glass, the stranger proceeded as follows.

CHAPTER XVI.

A VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

“THE story I am about to tell you, young man, is full of neither incident nor adventure. It is a simple enough tale, such as you may come across any day, probably, could you lift the cover off the hearts of men and read their unwritten records—which would be a rather unpleasant task!

“You are new to this life, I can see. Has it ever struck you to ask why we men, so old in it, cling to it? Everyone knows that there is little or no enjoyment in it after the first glamor has worn off. And yet we do cling to it, or it clings to us; I’ll be hanged if I know which.

“There goes the band now, clashing out the ‘Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay.’ Fifteen years ago it was not that song, but the French can-can, that I heard as I sat at a little table, just as I am sitting with you now. We were a gay

party—I, a freshman at the grand old University, just stretching my wings out after emerging from the narrow confines of the paternal and maternal shell. Life seemed one great, broad vista of pleasure to me then, just as it seems to these young fellows over there, who are tripping it so gayly with the sirens. Look at their smooth cheeks and nicely parted hair and sparkling eyes! That's the way I was that evening.

“There was a whole crowd of us, as there is every year; bright, joyous idiots, who thought they were just like ‘real men,’ because they smoked cigarettes, mixed with women, and drank beer. Oh, we were a ‘fast crowd,’ sure enough.

“There was Sadie and Mamie and Jennie and Rosie and Gracie, and all the rest of them—they are here now, most of them. And there were we, the representatives of our class, don't you know—Charlies and Freddies and Bobbies and Algernons and Richards. And, of course, we had lots of money in our pockets when it began, and the ‘girls’ had it all in their stockings before we were halfway through.

“But all these things were mere incidentals.

“As I sat at one of the tables, a man came up with his partner and took the adjoining seats. He was a sociable sort of a chap, and we soon got to talking quite freely. I asked him to drink, and he asked me to drink, and the girls were quite merry, and we hugged and kissed to our heart’s content, when I suddenly began to feel quite giddy—faint in fact. I had not drunk enough to be overpowered, and could not understand what the matter was. My new friend looked at me curiously and asked me if I wouldn’t have another drink. I declined, he insisted, I grew angry and he tried to force a glass of liquor down my throat. Then I struck him and he fell, and people rushed up. One of the ‘bouncers’ happening around, just looked at the man and then kicked him with his foot.

“ ‘Dat’s knock-out Charlie,’ ” said he.

“I did not know what that meant at the time, but I knew that I was feeling quite weak and dizzy, and I asked my ‘girl’ to come out into the street. So she put on her cloak and things, and we wandered out. Before I knew it, we were on the ‘campus,’ and then I insisted on her coming with me to my room. So we

went in together, and I must have succumbed to the effects of the drugged liquor, for I did not remember anything else until I found my room full of janitors and tutors and the Lord knows who else, and there was 'Lottie' with me, and I knew my career at the University was over.

"Well, father and mother, who had always thought me a model, as most fathers and mothers do, were heartbroken over the affair. I was expelled, of course, and father sent word that he did not want to see my face again. So I drew my regular allowance and went down to New York, determined to live down the disgrace.

"A few months later father died. I was the only son, and mother came to New York to live with me. For a little while everything went straight, but I soon found the quiet of home life intolerable. I could not shake off the thought that my father's death had been caused by my disgrace, and whenever mother got a-crying about him, as she often did, I felt like killing myself, too.

"You can see how the thing went. The next year I came up to this affair just to see what it looked like—the cause of all my misery.

I looked at the crowd and laughed to myself as I thought how idiotic it was, and I stayed until it was all over. But I found that I forgot myself a few moments at a time in following the mad motions of the revelers. So when I went back to New York I sought the same sort of places there. Of course there is no scarcity of them. Soon I grew to enjoy the whirl and riot. I came again and again, and still kept on coming. My mother drooped and pined and passed away, and after a short pause I plunged in deeper than ever, and I've been at it ever since.

"Of course, I have my moments of regret, and disgust and sorrow, as I have at present. But these soon pass, you know, as they always do with everyone, and then we plunge still deeper and deeper. Some day we strike bottom head first, and then there is an end to it.

"What think you of my story?"

Revere was silent for a few moments.

"Where is your will?" he finally asked.

The stranger laughed.

"The will," he replied, "is a pleasant fiction invented for the use of hypocrites. Once one plunges in the way I did, the will is

of as much use as it is to a drunkard or morphine fiend. No, no, my dear friend, the road we travel closes up behind us as we progress. The only way to be safe is to keep out of it."

Revere shook his head.

"I cannot believe it," he said.

"That is because you are inexperienced."

"Perhaps."

"Surely."

The two lapsed into silence.

"Why," Revere finally asked, "have you never married?"

"Married?" the stranger exclaimed.

"Married? Why, man, you don't suppose that I would be scoundrel enough to tie some pure young girl to myself? No, sir, whatever I may be, I am not as low as that. I know how society looks upon these things; it forgives everything in the man and nothing in the woman. But some day it will see its mistake. Then there will be a change!"

Revere was visibly affected by the stranger's speech. With an impulsive movement, he stretched his hand out to his companion.

"Sir," he exclaimed, "allow me to claim

the privilege of a friend. My name is John Revere."

The stranger shook his hand warmly.

"And mine," he answered, "is Robert Keene."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FLEETING VISION.

WHILE Revere's hand still rested in Mr. Keene's, a hearty slap on the back and an astonished "Well, well, well," brought him about with a turn.

"How are you, Mr. Armstrong," he answered, seeing that worthy's smiling visage bending over him.

"Fine as silk, old boy," Armstrong replied, "but what are you—you, John Revere, doing here?"

"Business," Revere curtly answered.

"Oh, I see, beg pardon," Armstrong apologized. "Well, what do you think of it?"

"Haven't had time to see it thoroughly yet," was Revere's evasive answer.

After Mr. Keene had been introduced to Armstrong, the latter sat down and the three were soon chatting in quite sociable fashion,

"Are you here all alone?" Keene asked Armstrong.

"Alone? No, not much; but my friends are taking care of my partner for me. As soon as they get through I'll have a chance to join her."

"H'm," Keene grunted, "guess you won't have much, then. Kids like these here don't know when they have had enough."

Armstrong laughed outright.

"You seem to know them well?" he asked.

"Too well," was the brief response.

Meanwhile Revere had been making sketches of such groups as he thought might prove of use to him. Suddenly his pencil came to a standstill.

"Mr. Keene," said he, "did you tell me that you knew every one here?"

"Pretty nearly."

"Well, then, just look over yonder, toward the right, do you see that woman there, the one with the rose domino? Who is she?"

"Let's see," Keene replied, "that—that—strange, she appears unfamiliar. Who can that be, now? I'll swear, I've seen her somewhere before."

Keene wrinkled his forehead and followed the woman's figure as she whirled now hither now thither in the mad throng. Revere still kept his eyes upon her.

"Strange," he muttered to himself—"such a magnificent figure—a little fuller, perhaps, but who can it be?"

At this moment Armstrong arose. "Who is it you are talking about?" he inquired.

Revere and Keene got upon their feet, too. Revere pointed at the woman.

"There," he said, "do you see her? she is turning in our direction now."

Armstrong laughed.

"You mean that girl who is looking toward us now? Why, that is——"

But Armstrong never finished the sentence. All in a second, as it were, the woman they were looking at sank down on the floor as if in a faint. With an oath Armstrong darted across the floor toward her. Revere was about to follow, when Keene laid a restraining hand upon his shoulder.

"Don't get into the crowd," he admonished, "I see that you have your watch and chain with you. This trick of creating excitement

is an old one. It generally costs one all removable valuables."

While Revere was still hesitating, the crowd surged toward the ladies' room.

"She'll be out again pretty soon," Keene said.

But although Revere remained several hours after, he did not see the woman again.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“MY PURE INNOCENT DOVE.”

THE cool balmy air of the morning went but a little way toward abating Revere's headache as he walked along the secluded paths of the Ramble. His wan face and frowning brow indicated too well the weariness he felt after the previous night's experience.

All at once his face cleared and his eye brightened. He had discerned her—her who would, best of all things, serve as the panacea for his ills.

“My darling!” he passionately exclaimed, as they met. She blushed divinely as she returned his ardent glance.

“I am so glad you are here this morning, Elaine, dear,” Revere continued.

She glanced up archly.

“Only this morning?” she pouted.

“And every other morning, dear,” he an-

swered, "and evening and night, too, for that matter."

"You enthusiastic boy," she half whispered, taking his arm, "but tell me, what makes you appear so utterly worn out this morning?"

"A little tired, dear, that's all."

"Is that all?" she quickly rejoined.

"You are bound to pity me, dear," was his laughing answer. "So I'll admit that I was rather unpleasantly situated last night."

"Tell me all about it," she urged.

"I don't like to, dear."

Her lips trembled a moment and then she looked up at him with a whole world of entreaty in her eyes. Revere surrendered.

"Come and sit down, dear, and I'll tell you," he said.

She pressed his arm.

"Then I'll try to cure you," she replied.

"Now, since you want to know," he began, "I'll tell you that I went to a very bad place last night; a place I don't like to mention to you, you know; one of those places over which one might well put Dante's inscription over the gateway to the Inferno."

"So bad?" she asked.

"Yes, darling, so bad that it seems a sin to even think of it in your presence."

Her face became rosy.

"Darling, you idealize me," she mildly protested.

"No, dearest," he answered. "I only pay you your due. But to proceed. I stayed there until after midnight, because I had to, for the paper, you know. I saw lots of things which I wish I had never seen and I only wish I were well out of the whole thing, that's all."

"What kind of people were there?" she asked.

"All kinds: men, women, beasts. It seems inconceivable that they should really be men and women. And yet I met men there whom I know to be quite 'respectable' in the community at large. I met one man, who is an acquaintance of mine in this city, a certain Mr. Armstrong. It seemed queer to see there a man I actually knew; it was one of those 'balls' you read about in the papers, you know. I actually feel that I am not fit to touch any human being just now, after having been there."

As Revere spoke, he unconsciously released Elaine's hand.

"No, no," she exclaimed, clasping his hand with her two, "do not think such things. It is people who go to such places voluntarily who are to blame, not people who are forced to go—as—as you are."

"You are a capital comforter, dear," Revere smilingly answered. "Still, I wish I were well out of the entire business. Oh, if some publisher would only give my book a chance! They are so afraid to touch a new man. The old hands turn out volume after volume of trash, but they swallow it all. Take a new author, however, and he goes begging from house to house. Then he scores a success and they curse themselves for confounded idiots, and repeat the performance!"

"Well, you'll score your success some day, dear, you know," she brightly answered.

"Are you so sure, darling?"

"Perfectly," she replied, with a world of trust beaming from her eyes.

"Then it must be so, dear," he exclaimed, patting her little hand, "and then"—but it

was unnecessary for him to say more. His ardent glance told the rest.

"Would you remember poor little me in your success?" she asked, with a pretty show of doubt.

"You little goose," he answered. "You like to tease."

"Ah, but I know," she continued in the same strain. "You will look for some one prettier and better——"

"There is no one," he gently interrupted.

"You would seek——"

" 'Twould be useless, dear."

"You think so now."

"Ah, darling, men like me love once and once only. You are my ideal, love, in beauty and goodness, but above all, in true womanliness. Were you lacking in any of these you would not be what you are. But you are what you are—you are yourself, dear, and in you I love all goodness and purity and innocence."

She could say nothing after such an answer. She only lay back and looked at him with her magnificent eyes.

The look electrified him. Her hands gently moving over his own seemed like the two

poles of some powerful current, stirring the very depths of his soul.

"Darling," he almost whispered, "I wish we were sure of isolation."

"Why?" she asked in the same tone.

"I wish to have you to myself, to hold you, to feel you——"

His arms were stealing around her.

"Take me!" she whispered.

He clasped her to his heart.

"My pure, innocent dove," he murmured, and their lips met in one long, clinging, passionate kiss.

CHAPTER XIX.

TWO FRIENDS.

HAVING completed all arrangements for the "supper," at which he hoped to prove Revere "no better than he ought to be," it now remained for Duffit to get his victim's consent to grace it with his presence.

Under cover of his recent declaration of friendship, then, the wily society editor approached Revere on the subject of the "love-feast."

"Come now, Revere, old man," he urged, during the course of his conversation, "don't set up in that fashion. You might just as well be companionable as not. We are all going to be there—Timbers and O'Tear and Armstrong—and I wish you would complete the party."

"But—" Revere attempted to object.

"But me no buts! We are all co-workers and when we have a little family reunion, so

to speak, you have no right to stay away. Timbers says there is no work to keep you away and I really won't accept a 'no' for an answer."

Still Revere was cautious. "Who will be there?" he asked.

"Everybody, and all of them jolly good fellows. Every man brings along one partner, and no more."

"You mean——"

"No, no. Not that sort. It's all straight, you know. Simply fun-loving girls. You needn't have any scruples on that score. Will you come?"

"I'll see——"

"Oh, the dickens! Why don't you say you will and put an end to it?"

Revere still hesitated.

"I have no one to bring along, you know," he objected.

"We'll provide some one for you."

"How?" was the quick response.

"Oh, I mean—we'll find some one to talk to you. You won't be lonely."

Revere now saw that he could not very well

refuse to come without appearing a boor. So, unwilling as he was, he consented.

"Very well," he said. "I will come."

Duffit was overjoyed.

"That's better," he exclaimed, slapping Revere on the back. "You may be sure you'll have a good time!"

Duffit having hurried away, Revere slowly walked across the room. He stopped at Sophie's desk.

"Hard at work as ever, Miss Duval?" he smilingly remarked.

The artiste dropped her pen and stretched her fingers.

"Not especially, Mr. Revere," she replied, "just scratching away."

"Don't you get terribly tired?" Revere asked.

"Sometimes. But that's the penalty of labor, you know. 'By the sweat of thy brow,' etc."

Revere joined in her laughter.

"By the way," Sophie said, "I see that Mr. Duffit and you are quite friends now."

"Friends?"

"Good acquaintances, then."

Revere curled his lip.

"As acquaintances go, Miss Duval," he answered.

The artiste was silent for a few moments.

Then she looked up at Revere.

"Do you know Mr. Revere—" she began and stopped.

"What, Miss Duval?" he encouraged her.

"I don't know that I shall tell you. You may be offended."

"Never at you," he gallantly replied.

"Flatterer!"

"Not guilty."

"Worse and worse!" she chided in a mock-serious tone.

"But you were going to say——"

"Well, I'll tell you. I was going to say that I don't like Mr. Duffit, and I don't like to see you with him."

She colored as she completed the sentence. Revere bit his lip.

"Now you are offended," she said.

"No," he answered, "I am pleased that you think as you do."

"Really?"

“Really. You have paid me a great compliment, which you must let me pay for by allowing me to take you to dinner to-night.”

And after a little of the usual woman's coquetry she assented.

CHAPTER XX.

THE TEMPTATION.

IN the "private dining hall" of a Broadway resort, then known only to a certain coterie of the "gilded youth" of the metropolis, but now familiar to all newspaper readers, the favored few who had been initiated into Duffit's scheme were assembled, eagerly awaiting the appearance of the tardy "Saint."

O'Tear was there, resplendent in a wonderfully checked waistcoat and a shirt front which had already lost its first polish; Timbers was there, irreproachable in his evening dress and with a mustache which tapered to a pin point on each side. There was Armstrong, joyous and fresh as ever and, not the least of them all—Robert Keene—man-about-town and connoisseur of women. A few others there were—lesser lights, who shone by the reflected glory of the leaders—but these were conscious

of their inferiority and kept in a separate group to themselves.

"Who is to play the principal feminine rôle to-night, Duffit?" Armstrong asked.

"She'll be here soon," was the answer.

"You know her well. It's Polly Powell."

"Polly Powell?" Armstrong exclaimed.

"Then Revere is done for!"

"Indeed?" Timbers queried. "And who is this Polly?"

"Don't know Polly Powell?" Duffit and Armstrong exclaimed with one accord, "why, Polly is the rage of the town!"

"I'm an old man, you know," Timbers apologized.

"Well, then, I'll tell you," Duffit replied.

"Polly Powell is the star of the burlesque constellation. No one knows much about her early history, but she burst on us some six months ago, and has been raising the deuce with the fellows in general ever since. She is the most consummate actress in private life I have ever seen. It took me a good long while to induce her to come, but she finally consented, and is coming all armed for triumph.

"There isn't a girl who can turn a fellow's

head quicker than Polly. She is a voluptuous creature and a past-mistress in all the arts and wiles of the sirens. There isn't a woman who can raise more of the devil in a given time than can Polly, and she faithfully promised to raise an extraordinary amount of the old one to-night. You'll see if she doesn't carry that angel away with her."

Timbers shook his head.

"You don't believe it, eh? Well, then, wait till you see. There she is now, by Jove, as big as life! Come over and I'll introduce you."

The greater portion of the male constituency had already gathered about Polly when Duffit and Timbers approached her.

"Miss Powell," Duffit said, "allow me to introduce my chief, Mr. Timbers."

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Tim—Timbers," was Polly's breezy salutation as she held a little pink-nailed hand out to the old fellow.

She was certainly a magnificent woman. Her form showed those truly Venus-like proportions which are seldom seen in the flesh, and while there was just a trace of command in her bearing, it was really more like that of

a thoughtless, careless butterfly, winging, now to this side and now to that, void of all restraint or confinement, the whole appearance giving one the impression of that curious combination of seriousness and mockery, wisdom and folly, and above all, lurking deviltry, which go to make up the history-building woman of easy love.

Timbers had to admit to himself that he had underestimated the powers of the "rage of the town."

"Suffering Aaron," said he to Duffit, in a confidential aside, "she's a corker from Corkville."

"She must be Irish, then," O'Tear ventured, "an' if she is, I'll claim fambly ties wid'er, damned if I don't. What'ell. She's a good t'ing!"

Duffit was delighted.

"Have you changed your programme any, Miss Powell?" he anxiously inquired.

"Changed nothing, my boy," she chirruped, "Trot out your angel and I'll annihilate him before he can say the Lord's prayer."

"You won't have long to wait," Duffit replied, "for here he comes now."

Polly looked at Revere curiously as he shook hands with Keene.

"H'm," she commented, "doesn't seem to be anything extraordinary about him. No long hair, no last century collar."

The company now seated themselves at the table, Duffit seeing to it that Polly was placed next to Revere.

"Allow me to introduce to you Miss Powell, Revere," Duffit took the opportunity to say.

Before Polly had time to give her customary off-hand salutation, Revere was on his feet bowing.

"I am pleased to form your acquaintance," he murmured, and Polly was literally forced into the conventional interchange of courtesies.

Without knowing it, Revere had won the first round.

And now Polly laid herself out to capture the young Westerner. With the oysters she tried to be jolly, but Revere was polite. With the consommé Polly was quite happy. Revere was distant. When the entrée came, Polly endeavored to convert Revere to her way of eating, but the young man stuck to the conventional method. Polly fairly languished over

the asparagus, but Revere simply would not follow the graceful motions of her tapering fingers. Clearly, there was something wrong there. Polly's spirits began to flag. Revere became interested in proportion. With the wine, Duffit looked for some outburst, but none came. Polly was as docile as a lamb. Revere talked about current topics and Polly listened.

Duffit finally caught her eye.

"Why don't you go ahead?" his glance plainly asked.

But she gave no answer.

Duffit was in despair.

The other feminine members of the gathering were now becoming hilarious on their own account.

"Polly?" one of the "ladies" called out.

Polly looked up.

"How high can you kick now?" the curious one cried.

Revere started. He looked at his companion inquiringly.

The girl flushed.

"I am an actress," she half-whispered.

Revere bit his lip.

"And who are the others?" he asked.

She cast her eyes down and became redder than ever.

"They are —— women.

"Polly," Duffit exclaimed, determined to bring things to a crisis, and forgetful of the fact that until that moment he had called her "Miss Powell," "Polly, won't you show us some of your fancy steps to-night?"

Revere felt his hand under the tablecloth caught by hers. It was burning hot.

"Miss Powell does not fell well, Duffit," he answered for her.

"Nonsense!" Duffit, whom the wine and chagrin were fast driving furious, cried out, "Polly is never too ill to dance! clear the floor there, and let's see her do something pretty."

Revere felt the grip tightening on his hand.

"I have told you, Duffit," he said, laying emphasis on the "I," "that Miss Powell is ill."

Duffit was rapidly losing all his self-control.

"What in hell do you know about Polly?" he cried, "I know all about her! Polly can dance at any time."

Revere's eyes fairly flashed fire as he started

to rise from the table, but the same hot little hand kept him down, and a tremulous voice whispered:

“Do nothing rash, but let me go home.”

“Gentlemen,” Revere said, composing his voice, “this lady wishes to go home. I shall therefore”—but she interrupted him with a faint:

“Mr. Keene will see me home.”

“Mr. Keene,” he asked, “will you see Miss Powell home?”

“With pleasure,” was the answer.

Polly arose, leaning on Revere’s arm. The others followed.

“Tee-hee-hee,” one damsel snickered, “Polly’s experienced religion.”

“Shut yer mout,” O’Tear gently admonished.

“Revere,” Keene said in an undertone, as Polly was putting her wraps on, “get out of here: it’s no place for you. You’re a brick.”

At this moment Polly announced herself ready to go.

“Miss Powell,” Revere asked her as they shook hands, “did you have a mission here to-night?”

Her eyes sought the floor again.

"Yes," was the almost inaudible reply.

"Are you glad you did not execute it?"

She looked up now.

"Yes," she answered in a firmer tone.

"Then I am glad I have met you, Miss Powell, and wish you all prosperity in the future."

She seemed pleased at his expression of good will.

"And I wish you"—she replied, "to—to remain ever the same as you are."

He pressed her little hand warmly.

"Good-by, Mr. Revere," she half-sobbed, "and—and God bless you."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE REACTION.

SILENCE reigned supreme in the room as Miss Powell and Keene walked out—silence which was broken at last by Timbers approaching Revere with his hand extended.

“Revere, my boy,” said he, “I’m damned proud of you. ’Twas all a put-up job, you know, and I’m glad it fell though.”

Revere saw the old man was in earnest, and silently pressed his hand. But hardly had Timbers ceased speaking when O’Tear came up. He was already well “under the influence,” but he still had consciousness enough left to appreciate the light in which they appeared.

“John, me boy,” said he, grasping Revere’s arm, “kin yer fergive an ole chap like me?”

“For what?” Revere cheerily asked.

“Fer bein’ in wid dis yer gang. But I had me tin on yer, ye know.”

"What do you mean?"

"Why, 'twaz all a put-up job, ye know. Timbers an' me put our boodle on yer agin Duffit, see?"

"The hound!"

"Dat's what he is," O'Tear acquiesced. "But yer'll fergive me, won't ye?"

He was almost in tears.

"All right, old chap, all right," Revere answered, "but I must be going now."

"Not before you have let me into a share of your dispensations," Armstrong interposed, putting his hand on Revere's shoulder.

"This is getting to be too dramatic, altogether," Revere laughingly protested. "Really, gentlemen, I can attach no blame to any of you for wishing to see the fun, but that hound Duffit——"

"Don't bother yourself about him," Armstrong replied, "he'll soon be beyond the reach of us all, if he keeps on the way he is doing now."

All four instinctively looked about for the arch-conspirator, and were surprised to see him prostrate upon a couch.

"What is it?" Revere inquired.

“Morphine. He’s been at it for some time and just took some to help himself through the excitement.”

“Ugh,” Revere shivered, as he put his overcoat on, “the miserable wretch!”

As soon as Revere had left the party abandoned all restraint. Heels went up in the air, bottle popped after bottle and the frenzy grew more and more intense as the hours flew by. But Duffit lay still upon the sofa, his heavy breathing unheard in the general din, sleeping off the effects of the subtle poison that had already laid hold upon his vitality and was slowly but surely dragging him down, lower, lower, lower, into the bottomless abyss of the narcotic’s pseudo-Paradise.

CHAPTER XXII.

A GENTLEMAN AND A MAN.

MEANWHILE Polly and her escort were being driven home. Polly had no sooner entered the carriage than she had burst into a flood of tears, and it was all that Keene could do to keep from jumping out into the roadway, for, like most men, he would have faced a roaring lion rather than a crying woman.

"There, there Polly, don't be a big baby," he coaxed, attempting to pacify her, "cheer up now, and dry your eyes. Don't cry."

"I-I-I am n-n-not-t c-c-cry-cry-crying!" Polly managed to gasp between sobs, "I-I a-am-am a-all ri-right n-n-now."

"All right, then," was the dubious answer.

"The-the me-mean wr-wretch!" Polly exclaimed, as soon as she had regained some control over herself.

"Who?" Keene wickedly asked, "Revere?"

"No!" she almost screamed, "you know who I mean. It's that sneaky Duffit!"

"What about him?"

"He's a wretch!"

"Why?"

"Why did he induce me to come, when—when he knew who Mr. Revere was, and—and how different he was from the others, and—and what did he want to talk to me in that horrible fashion for? Oh, the next time I see him I'll scratch his miserable eyes out, that's what I'll do!"

"There, there," Keene gently remonstrated, "he won't come near you again, you know. Just calm down and be nice."

"I can't calm down!" she answered, "when I think of the show he made of me! The beast! When I plainly told him with my eyes that I wished him to remain quiet!"

"What did you come for, in the first place?" Keene asked.

"Because he coaxed me to."

"And didn't you intend to do as he wanted you to?"

She hesitated before she replied.

"Yes," she finally admitted.

"Why didn't you, then?" he pressed on interppgatively.

"Why?" she exclaimed, "why didn't I? Because! Because things were different. Oh, Mr. Keene, can't you understand?"

"Hardly."

"I'll tell you, then. Have you ever entered a hall where some one was posing nude for artists? If you were a stranger, did you ever remark how the model would lose the pose, and be confused and ashamed? If you ever have you will see why I couldn't do things the way I always do. It's all right with the regular run, like—like——"

"Like Duffit or me," Keene quietly suggested.

"With the regular run," she repeated, ignoring him, "but when some one comes in like—like Mr. Revere, then I feel that I can't do it, that's all. All the others are not like—like——"

"Men," Keene again suggested.

"Like him," she continued, again ignoring his prompting, "but he—he makes me feel different. He treated me the way he would his mother or sister, or any other real lady,

and I felt that I was not with the regular run, but with a—a——”

“A man,” Keene suggested.

She hesitated a moment.

“A man,” she finally admitted.

They both lapsed into silence, which lasted until the cab drew up at her door.

“Polly,” Keene gravely said, as he assisted her up the stairs, “Revere and you have taught me a lesson to-night I shall not easily forget. God bless you, Polly.”

“But you will come to see me, won’t you?” Polly asked, as she stood in the doorway.

“Yes,” Keene answered, “if you will look upon me as a—a——”

It was his turn to hesitate now.

“A man?” she lightly interrogated.

“A man,” he assented.

“I will,” she cried, and kissing her hand to him, vanished.

Keene dismissed the carriage, and thrusting his hands into his pockets, thoughtfully walked down the avenue.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MORNING AFTER.

THERE was an air of general apathy in the office the following day. Timbers, although at his desk, was "sick," and the members of the staff, as is always the case, showed the same lack of interest in matters that their chief did. Revere, having left the "supper" at a comparatively early hour, suffered no qualms, but he, too, was somewhat depressed. Duffit had come in for a few moments and passed out without exchanging a word with any one. O'Tear had not shown up at all.

"Have you seen O'Tear to-day, Mr. Timbers?" Revere asked.

"No," was the answer, "he hasn't come down."

"Is he sick?"

"I shouldn't wonder. He was pretty heavily loaded when I saw him last. Gad! How my head throbs!"

Revere went back to his desk. He had hardly settled down to work, when he heard Timbers calling him.

Timbers' face wore a scared look.

"Bad news, Revere," he said.

"About whom?"

"O'Tear."

"O'Tear? What is it?"

"He's in the hospital. Here's the local news bulletin. Just came in. O'Tear was picked up unconscious at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Tenth Street. They took him to the hospital, and he's developed a bad case of the D. T.'s."

Revere paled when he heard the last words.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed, "Poor O'Tear."

"Poor boy!" Timbers echoed.

"To-morrow is my day off, Mr. Timbers," Revere said, "may I change off, so as to be able to go to see him to-day?"

"Nonsense, my dear boy," Timbers answered, "you just go ahead and never mind your day off or your day on. The poor lad needs a friend just now."

Revere almost ran out of the building.

At the hospital, he soon received permission

to see O'Tear, and in charge of a nurse was sent up to the ward.

His blood ran cold as he recognized O'Tear's voice, even before the door had opened.

"Oh, it's choking me! There, there, don't you see it? oh, take them off, take them off! Mercy! Mercy! It's choking me! Why don't you take them away?"

The tears stood in Revere's eyes as he slowly approached his friend's bed. Several nurses were already grouped around it.

"Poor man," one of them said, "he has just started off. The doctor will be here in a minute."

"Oh, take them off!" O'Tear was now feebly moaning. He grasped at his throat and leaning over motioned as if he were throwing something on the floor. Then he passed his hand over his chest. "Ah-h-h!" he shuddered, and flung his arm out with full force. Revere caught his hand and leaned over him.

"O'Tear, old man," he whispered, "don't you know me?"

A gleam of intelligence shot from the patient's large, watery eyes. He sank back on his pillow.

"John, my boy," he murmured, "I am bad—bad——"

"Now, now, dear boy, just brace up."

"Those horrible things——"

"No, no, you don't see them now, do you? They're hallucinations, you know, don't you?"

"Yes," he answered, "I don't"—then his body stiffened. The same horrified look came into his eyes. "There they are! Don't you see them? They are crawling all over me! Take them off!"

"What is it?" Revere asked, a big lump in his throat almost choking his utterance.

"Snakes! Ugh! Rats! See them staring at me! Take them off! Take them off!"

It was at this juncture that the doctor arrived. In a moment the hypodermic barrel was filled, the needle was screwed in, and the opiate went coursing through the blood.

O'Tear was now writhing in that terrible convulsion characteristic of a severe attack of the disease. It was all that Revere could do to keep the tears from gushing out of his eyes, but to his relief the intensity of the shivers soon ceased; the limbs began to relax,

and in some ten minutes, O'Tear was entirely under the effects of the narcotic.

It was then that Revere withdrew the hand which O'Tear had retained in his grasp throughout and turned to the doctor.

"What are his chances, doctor?" he asked.

"I guess he'll pull through all right," the youthful disciple of Hippocrates replied.

"Thank God!" a feminine voice sighed behind them.

The doctor turned in surprise.

"How now, Sister Dolorosa? Crying, too? Do you know the patient?"

"Yes, doctor," the sombre-clad Sister who stood at the head of the bed, replied: "I know him."

"Then we must take doubly good care of him, for your sake," the physician gallantly exclaimed.

Revere was interested. Who was this woman who knew O'Tear?

"Pardon me, madam," said he, "I, too, am a friend of Mr. O'Tear's. I hope he will receive the best of care."

"Yes, indeed," was the gentle answer, "I shall do all I can for him." Revere now re-

marked that the Sister's face, although bearing the traces of the passage of many years, still showed indications of great beauty. There was a sad, pensive look in her eyes, which rested caressingly now and again on the sufferer's countenance.

"If any money is needed—" Revere began.

"No, no; not at all," she exclaimed. "I shall look after him. With heaven's help, he shall come back to health."

"God grant it," Revere reverently responded, "and reward you for your goodness."

He stretched out his hand and held hers for a moment, then hastily walked out of the ward.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FOUND!

THERE was quite a little stir in the office when Revere reported the result of his visit. Timbers at once announced his intention of paying a visit to the hospital the following day. Armstrong, too, happening to meet Revere on the street, promised to be there the next afternoon.

Accordingly, four o'clock found them all at the hospital. Revere was the first to approach the bedside and was quite surprised to see the improvement in O'Tear's condition.

O'Tear was lying back, his pale face showing almost ghastly against the snow-white pillow, but with a happy, contented look on it. Sister Dolorosa was busily engaged in arranging some flowers on a table nearby. The patient fairly beamed with pleasure when Revere bent over him.

"Thanks, John, old chap," he weakly whispered. "It's kind of you——"

"Tut, tut, dear old fellow," Revere interrupted, stroking his hand, "it's a pleasure to see you on the mend. But there are others here, beside me."

"Who?"

"Why, Timbers and Armstrong. Do you feel like seeing any one?"

"Yes, yes," he replied.

So Timbers came in, followed by Armstrong, Timbers stepping as gingerly as if he were treading on eggs, and Armstrong handling his hat nervously; and the two shook O'Tear by the hand as gently as they could, and all three sat down on the bed, and cautioned the sick man not to say a word, and all talked thirteen to the dozen about all manner of things and asked him innumerable questions and stopped him before he could answer them, and spoke to him of the outside world as if he had been out of it a year instead of a day, and petted him as if he were a little child, and called him "dear boy," and "good old chap," and "fine old fellow," and "chummie" to their heart's content and promised to send him in-

numerable cans of jellies and preserves and dainties enough to stock a hotel pantry, and behaved in general in the dear old foolish away people always do with patients and finally declared that they musn't stay a moment longer, or it might hurt him, and shook hands with him again and again, and were all stealing off together, when O'Tear asked Revere to stay behind for a few moments. So Timbers and Armstrong promised to wait in the office and tiptoed out again.

"John," O'Tear said, as soon as the two friends had gone off, "do you remember the little story I told you one night on the Bowery?"

"Yes," Revere answered, "but don't call up those unpleasant memories just now."

"Ah, but they are not unpleasant any longer."

"No? That's good."

"No. Do you remember what I told you about the little flat I have kept all these years?"

"Yes."

"Well, I am going to make use of it, after all. Ah, boy, I'm the happiest man in New York to-day."

“You mean——”

“Yes, old fellow, I have found her. There she is—Sister Dolorosa, as she is known here, but to me, my own darling Alice; my little sweetheart and wife that is to be!” Then, of course, he called her over and introduced her, and she blushed and stammered when Revere shook her hand and congratulated her, and O’Tear was radiant with joy and love, and patted her hand, and returned Revere’s hearty pressure, and declared over and over again that he was the happiest man in the universe and for just fifteen minutes the three forgot that there was any one else in the world but they, until finally Alice tore herself away and went off to her flowers, and Revere assured O’Tear again and again that he was a “lucky dog,” and O’Tear pleaded guilty.

“But just think, John, old man,” said he, “all these years she has refused to take the black veil, because she felt that some day we should be brought together again. Ah, my boy, I really don’t deserve the angel. Now you just wait till I get out and you’ll see that there is still something else in Jim O’Tear beside rum and curses.”

"I know it, old fellow, I know it," Revere assured him, "but I must leave you to rest now."

"All right, but don't tell any of them about it just yet, will you?"

"Not if you don't wish me to."

"Not yet."

"All right, good-by, old man."

"Good-by."

CHAPTER XXV.

“SOPHIE DUVAL!”

IN the office Revere found Timbers and Armstrong pacing up and down impatiently.

“Well,” Timbers exclaimed, “you’ve been at it long enough. What was it, a last confession?”

“More or less,” Revere answered, smiling.

“Well, hope you won’t have any chance to use it. Mother of Josiah! It makes me feel creepy to see the poor boy lying there on that spindle-legged cot!”

“Well,” Revere replied, “I guess he’ll be out before long.”

“The sooner the better,” Timbers muttered, as he aimed a vicious kick at a stray cat which was scudding down the hospital stairs in front of him. “I hate hospitals!”

The short journey downtown was completed in silence, Timbers burying himself in the

late editions of the evening papers, and Armstrong thoughtfully staring out of the car window. From the City Hall station Timbers hurried off to the office, while Revere accepted Armstrong's invitation to have dinner with him. They strolled over to the Astor House, but even after they had seated themselves at the table Armstrong remained taciturn and morose.

"You seem to have the 'blues to-day," Revere finally ventured to remark.

Armstrong sighed.

"Guess you're about right," he answered, "only I've been at it for some time."

"Blues at length? Horrible!"

"Yes, it is pretty bad. But what's one going to do? Once you start in, there's no drawing back." Armstrong was now talking more to himself than to Revere. "Ah, there is no denying that in certain roads one can only walk downward, never up again."

Revere stared at him in astonishment.

"What!" he exclaimed, "you moralizing?"

"Queer isn't it?" the other returned, a ghost of a smile flitting across his lips, "but we all have our troubles, although they seem worse when we bring them upon ourselves."

For some time after this outburst Armstrong toyed with his knife and fork in silence, making a pretense at eating. Finally he threw the implements down and pushed his plate away.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," he exclaimed, "I'm going to ask you for advice. What do you say?"

"You know how it is," Revere replied. "Advice is generally easy to get, but hard to follow."

"Oh, I know, but this is different. You see, it's all about my girl."

Revere shifted uneasily.

"I know your scruples," Armstrong quickly said, noting his perturbation, "and that's why I talk to you about it. I think your head is level on the subject. Now I'll tell you how it is. My girl is one in a million, I must admit. But she's been queer of late, almost no life in her at all, and calling for money like the devil. I can't make it out. Whatever she does with the money, I don't know, but I conjecture that she's got some one she's supporting or helping support. Now I don't care who it is, if it isn't some man. You know there are such men.

“And that brings me to the point of the affair. I’ve been thinking for some time of settling down, and I’ve felt more than once like marrying the girl just as she is. You think it strange? Ah, you don’t know the girl. She’s an angel!”

“Well, when a fellow feels that way about a girl he hates to think there’s some one else in the background, don’t you know. I can’t get a word out of her. Says it’s a sacred affair of her own only, and all that.

“So you see how it is. As a matter of fact, if it wasn’t for another affair of mine, which is weighing rather heavily on me, I would probably have made the girl my wife before this. As it is, I feel somewhat squeamish. I may tell you about the other affair some other time, but meanwhile I do not know what to do with my girl. Lily Degraw her name is. I have my suspicions that she is supporting some mother or sister somewhere, but I am not sure, and in case there is a fellow—you see how unpleasant it would be. Oh, Lord, there is no getting out of it. I love the girl down to her little toes, and I can’t think any ill of her.”

Armstrong ceased and looked hard at the tablecloth.

"What do you say?" he finally asked.

Revere stroked his chin meditatively.

"Well," he finally answered, "you know what my views are. I don't think you had better press me to go on with them at length. You had better look things over carefully yourself. I really do not see any satisfactory solution to your problem."

Armstrong groaned.

"It's pretty well tangled, I know," he said, "but 'twould become more so if you knew about the other story. That's worse yet. I have half a mind to tell you about it now. But no—I'll wait for some other opportunity."

The dinner was completed in silence.

"Come uptown with me," Armstrong then urged, "I need some one's company to-night."

"Very well, I'll be pleased to be the 'company,' " Revere answered, "but I want to run into the office and get some papers from my desk. Will you come up?"

"Yes. It's some time since I've been up there."

In a few minutes Revere was busy sorting out some papers in his desk, Armstrong meanwhile standing by and turning over the leaves of a stray periodical.

"There," Revere said, "I have them now." Armstrong was laying the magazine down, when Revere saw Miss Duval coming down between the row of desks.

"Good-evening, Miss Duval," he cheerfully called out.

As the words left his lips Armstrong jumped up as if he had been shot. He turned about, and Miss Duval seeing him at the same instant, her inarticulate gasp and his cry of "Sophie!" came simultaneously. For a moment she swayed, as if about to fall, but recovering herself, cast one burning, contemptuous glance at him, and then passed on to her desk.

Revere had witnessed this scene with the greatest amazement. Armstrong had made a motion as if to follow Sophie, but restraining himself, turned back and clutched Revere by the arm.

"Come out," he almost groaned, "come into the fresh air."

Once outside, Armstrong seemed to regain some of his self-command.

"Tell me," he asked, "what is she doing here?"

"Miss Duval?" Revere answered, "why, she is our woman artist."

Armstrong sighed.

"Poor girl!" he said, "has it come to this? Does she have to work for her living in that miserable hole while I—I—the cause of all her trouble, am rolling in luxury! Poor, poor little girl!"

Revere listened with amazement. The whole affair appeared incomprehensible to him.

"But tell me," Armstrong began again, "how does she get along there? Is she able to do the work? Is she well treated? How does she behave?"

"Miss Duval," Revere replied, "is a woman who would command respect anywhere, and she certainly does in the office. She works hard—harder than any woman should work, I believe, and I esteem her as I would any good, noble woman."

"Good and noble she is, indeed," Armstrong echoed, "and there is none higher than

she in any respect. Had it not been for me and my perfidy she would not be here to-day, working herself to death for a miserable pittance per week. Listen, I told you a little while ago about 'another affair!' Well, she is that 'other affair!' If you will allow me to do so, I shall tell you about it, and let you see what a miserable coward I am. But I may yet do what I can to make up for my wretched work. I must, however, tell you the whole story. It will relieve me. Let us walk up Broadway.'

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE OLD, OLD STORY.

“I MET Sophie two years ago. There was no sweeter or prettier girl in New Orleans than she, and as her family was of the best French descent, I did not hesitate to sue for her hand. She was quite childish, even for her young years, and having just come out of the convent, knew next to nothing about the world. She sang angelically, played divinely, and rivaled nature with the brush. In short, she was a little bundle of perfection, and I, being about the first man she had ever seen, it naturally followed that I soon won her dear, innocent little heart.

“But mark you, no sooner had I gained her consent to become my wife than I repented the hasty step. I was still young—I said to myself—much too young to marry. I loved Sophie, ’twas true, but I loved myself also.

So, with the growth of one thought after another, I gradually resolved to sacrifice Sophie instead of myself, and—I actually did so.

“Under solemn promise of marriage I gained possession of my trusting little sweetheart, and when there appeared danger of the secret leaking out, I easily induced her to fly with me. It was the same old story. We went from city to city, Sophie enjoying the strange sights like the child that she was, and I enjoying my companion as one generally does under the circumstances. But soon Sophie grew importunate. She demanded that I fulfill my promise, and I put her off under various pretenses. She grew alarmed and began to insist.

“Still I delayed. Then came little scenes. Sophie cried, I pacified. Sophie threatened, I cajoled. We came to New York. Week week after went by. Sophie drooped and pined away. But I, plunging deep into the vortex of metropolitan pleasures, cared very little about her or her troubles. Sophie finally made one grand attempt to make me keep my word. I steeled myself and told her she was

welcome to my protection, but my name she should never bear!

“What a coward I was! Poor little girl! She said nothing after that, but just put her things on and walked out. I thought it was only a trick and did not stop her. I knew she carried very little money and imagined she would come back the following day. But three days passed and I heard nothing of her. Then I set detectives on her track and found her before the week’s end. As a preliminary, I sent her a substantial check. It came back that same evening, and my detectives could not trace her again.

“So, I grieved a little while, and cursed myself, and swore to do her justice if I got a chance, and went off traveling again. In Baltimore I picked up Lily Degraw and brought her back with me. As for Sophie, I never saw her again until this day. I see it all now. The poor little girl went to work here and has been supporting herself by the labor of her own hands. Poor darling!”

Armstrong paused and the two walked on in silence for a few minutes.

“But what am I to do now?” Armstrong

burst out. "I don't know what to do! I love one, I love the other. God! What a terrible thing it is to get into this maelstrom! Ah, it is true, we sow the wind and reap—and reap a thousand whirlwinds! What am I to do now?"

Revere shook his head.

"I think the path is clearly marked before you," he said.

"To do what?"

"Do justice to the poor girl you have injured."

"And forsake the one I love?"

"Your mistress?"

Armstrong winced. The word seemed to have a peculiar acridity coming from Revere's mouth.

"My—mistress," he assented.

"You owe her no duty."

"True."

A short pause followed again.

"So you think I ought to marry Sophie?" Armstrong finally said.

"I do."

"And my—my mistress?"

“Send her where she belongs, out of the path of an injured girl. Do not allow pleasure to interfere with duty.”

“Well,” was the dejected answer, “I’ll see what I can do.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

AT THE FRENCH BALL.

It was the scene at New Haven over again, only on a grander, more magnificent scale. There were the immaculate young bloods—and the old ones—the thickly-rouged “ladies,” the square-shouldered “bouncers,” and all the other appurtenances of the old time “French Ball.”

What gay New Yorker has not paid his ten dollars for the precious privilege of witnessing those manifestations—commonly called “breaks”—on the part of the feminine contingent, which consist of a grand exhibition of any amount of hosiery and lingerie, framing a more or less diminutive foot, fanning the air in the immediate vicinity of a temptingly held silk hat? The scenes of the “French Ball” have been exploited too much by the daily press to require any lengthy description.

Disgusted but alert, Revere paced up and

down the floor, faithfully fulfilling—what Timbers had promised him should be—the last “gay” assignment of the season.

In making the turn at the eastern part of the garden, Revere came face to face with Keene. It was the first time they had met since the memorable night of Duffit’s supper. Their conversation naturally reverted to that topic.

“Yes, old chap,” Keene was saying, “he’s actually here to-night.”

“Duffit?”

“Exactly. But who his partner may be is beyond me. She’s tall and thin and angular—not at all one of the crowd—seems to be trying to appear at ease, but I’ll be hanged if I can make her out. Just a little touch of paint, you know—looks like an enameled mummy.”

Revere laughed.

“And you are all alone?” he asked.

“I? Not at all. Who do you think is with me?”

“Give it up.”

“You might have tried to guess. Miss Powell!”

Revere bit his lip.

"I didn't think—" he began.

"Oh, you're off the track, old chap," Keene interpolated, "she's here in strict 'incog.' Come over and see her. She's in a box—all to ourselves, you know."

Revere hung back.

"I say," Keene urged, "I really wish you would—don't you know. I want you to meet Miss Powell again and know her better. She's anxious, too, that you should. I've seen her quite often of late. She's no end of a nice girl, don't you know—full of fun, but straight as a church. No nonsense, you understand. I just brought her here because she wanted to see what the thing looked like."

Revere yielded and followed his friend to the box. After fifteen minutes' conversation with Miss Powell, he had to admit to himself that there was quite a difference between the woman he had seen at the supper and the woman he saw that night.

She was undeniably handsome, dashing, a mistress of the art of charming, a ravisher of men's senses. She was positively brilliant in her conversation that evening and seemed to

find great pleasure in deriding the creatures who danced and pirouetted on the floor below them.

"Look!" Keene, who had been leaning over the back of her chair, suddenly exclaimed, "there goes our friend!"

Following the direction of Keene's finger Revere distinguished Duffit's face in the crowd and there, hanging on his arm, was Maria Ann Overley!

"Who is it?" Keene asked.

"One of our reporters!" Revere briefly replied.

Almost at the same instant Miss Overley saw the occupants of the box. Revere stepped back a little, but it was too late. He could see her arguing with her partner for a moment or two, and then she released his arm and struggled across the floor. He had hardly turned about, when she was in the box.

"Didn't expect to see me here, did you?" she began, by way of salutation, "but you know, a newspaper woman can go anywhere."

"Certainly, madam," Revere dryly replied.

"Miss, just plain miss," the Amazon corrected.

"Miss," Revere acquiesced.

"Won't you introduce me to your friends?"

Miss Overley calmly asked, and when Revere had accomplished the task with all the grace he could muster, she at once became confidential.

"Would you believe it?" she said, "I had to beg and beg of dear Mr. Duffit before he would consent to take me along with him. Finally I bought the tickets, and then he couldn't refuse, don't you know. I tried to induce that namby-pamby Duval girl to come, but she just wouldn't. Mr. Duffit is such an angel of a man, though. I really believe he has been wanting to kiss me all the evening, but I wouldn't encourage him, don't you know—not for the world. I don't think it's right. Beside, what would people think?"

Not receiving any answer to the ponderous query, Miss Overley took a fresh start, and proceeded:

"It's quite a gay crowd, isn't it? So romantic, don't you know. I declare, I don't think my club friends would back me any longer if they knew I enjoyed this, but they don't, you know. They always think it's duty,

and painful and all that. I'm a reformer, don't you know."

Having taken a long breath, Miss Overley was just about to start on a new verbal excursion, when she observed Duffit hilariously whirling around the floor with a dizzy-looking, be-tighted and be-spangled maiden.

"I declare!" she hastily exclaimed, an ominous glitter lighting in her eyes, "there's dear Mr. Duffit calling me now. The dear man actually can't get along without me. Hope you'll excuse me. I'll see you all later." And in a twinkling she was out of the box and sturdily elbowing her way through the crowd.

Polly Powell was the first one to break the silence which ensued. Her silvery laughter was soon mingling with Keene's. Revere alone looked discomfited.

"Observe the tragedy!" Polly cried, moving toward the front of the box.

Miss Overley had no sooner caught up with Duffit than she laid her hand on his shoulder. Duffit seemed to be pretty well "under the influence," for he wobbled as he came to a sudden stop. From the pantomime which followed it was evident that an argument was in progress, which was brought to a sudden ter-

mination by the other fair one abandoning the field and flying under the protecting wing of a passing reveler, pursued by nothing more harmful than the indignant glances of the fair Miss Overley, who promptly sank into her escort's arms.

It would be difficult to say why he did it, but just as the pair came abreast of the box Revere was in, Duffit was seen to bend forward and imprint a salute upon the chaste lips of Miss Maria Ann! The look of triumph which she shot at her colleague the next moment fairly electrified him.

Revere turned from the spectacle and engaged Miss Powell in conversation. Now and again Keene joined in, but he seemed to prefer listening. Finally he abandoned the field altogether and devoted his attention to the crowd.

Suddenly he turned around.

"Revere," he said, "will you come here a moment?"

Revere stepped forward.

"Do you remember the mysterious lady at New Haven?" Keene asked.

"The one who fainted? Yes. Why?"

"She's here to-night. I know her now. See her over there toward the left?"

"Toward the left? Mmm—m—oh, yes, that's the one? She has the same mask on, too. Who is she?"

"Guess."

"Can't."

"Well, that is the mistress of your friend Mr. Armstrong. Her name is Lily Degraw."

"Lily Degraw? What an odd combination! Lily Degraw! See! She must know you—she has turned in our direction. There's Armstrong, right behind her. She has turned away—there she is now—no, it is not she. Can you still see her?"

"No," Keene replied. "She's mixed in the shuffle. Why are you so interested?"

"I'm sure I don't know. Just curiosity, I suppose."

"Magnificent woman, isn't she?"

"More or less."

"What do you think of her figure?"

"Quite shapely."

"Think it compares with Miss Powell's?"

Revere smiled.

"I'm a poor judge of those things, you know," he replied.

The two now rejoined Miss Powell, but although Revere watched for an hour or more, he saw neither the masked Miss Degraw nor Armstrong again.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“DO YOU THINK I OUGHT TO MARRY HIM?”

DURING the term of his employment in the office Revere had entirely conquered little Joe's heart. He was now the confidant of all his woes and Joe had no small amount of them. With the advent of Miss Duval, Joe had hesitated somewhat between the two, but seeing that Revere and the young lady were on the best of terms, he swore allegiance to them jointly, as well as separately. Revere was not at all surprised, therefore, when Joe came to him the following day with fire in his eye, and informed him that he thought that Miss Duval should be looked after.

“Why, what's the matter, Joe?” he asked.

“It's all on 'count uv dat feller what his nibs Duffit hangs out wid—Armstrong, his name bees. Dat bloke, he come in here yisti-day, an' he goes up t' Miss Doo-val an' she tells 'im as how she don't wan't t' have nuthin'

to' do wid 'im, but he don't take no water at all, but talks away like 's if he wuz wound up like a phunnigraph, an' Miss Doo-val, she gits on 'er ear an' tells 'im as how he's no gentleman, but dat cuts no ice wid 'im. He jist keeps at it an' Miss Doo-val near a-cryin' an' all that. So, fin'ly, she a'most screams an' she wishes he'd leave 'er, an' den he tells 'er as 'ow she'll change 'er mind some day, an' she'll be glad uv it an' all dat. I dunno w'at it's all erbaut, but say, Mr. Revere, if I wuz grown up an' big, an' not afeared uv bein' fired, I'd jist go in an' wallop de life outen 'im, I would!"

Revere promised to see to the matter and sent Joe away quite jubilant, and then began to sort his mail. The first note he opened was from Keene.

"MY DEAR REVERE," it read, "I write this just after the ball. I want to see you and discuss some matters this evening. Can you manage to meet me at the X— Club at eight o'clock? It may be an inducement to you to know that Miss P. P. is to be the subject of the conversation.

"Sincerely yours,

"ROBERT KEENE."

"I wonder what he is up to now?" Revere muttered, as he replaced the sheet in its envelope and walked over to Timbers' desk.

"Shall I be on duty to-night?" he asked.

"No, I guess we won't need you after five. I wish I could say as much for Duffit. Damn it, I don't know what to do with the man. He's not worth his salt. Look here, how would you like to handle his stuff permanently?"

Revere shook his head.

"Well," Timbers continued, "I suppose you're right, but I really don't see what I can do with the man. He's positively gorging himself with morphine, and there's no stopping him. As for Overley—she's no good at all, now. I heard that she was up at the ball with him last night. Is that true?"

Revere nodded.

"Well, then," Timbers exploded, "the devil's in it, that's all. Jumping Jerusalem! Who'd have thought she'd go so fast? A decent woman she is, too. I thought a good deal of her myself, and now, to see her go over the side like that!"

His emotion seemed to master him for a moment.

"Boy!" his familiar shrill shout finally rang out, "bring me a big bottle of lager!"

"Yes, sir," he continued, as soon as he had seen one of the "devils" whisk down the stairs, "the office is going to the dogs. I don't know what they'd do without me. The only consolation I really have is in O'Tear. Lord, how the man has picked up! I could swear I'd never known him before."

The boy now rushed up with the liquid refreshment. Having invited Revere to join him and graciously allowed him to decline the honor with thanks, Timbers took a long draught and immediately became light-hearted.

"I suppose it'll all come out right in the end," he concluded. "By the way, are you going to the wedding?"

"O'Tear's?" Revere replied. "Of course. I'm to be the best man, you know."

"And I," Timbers proudly announced, "am to give away the bride!"

Upon which he pledged himself in another glass of the amber liquid and nearly startled Joe out of his boots by shying a half dollar at him and ordering him to "rush" another bottle and to keep the change.

It seemed to be a day of letters for Revere, for just as he was getting ready to leave, late that afternoon, the mail distributor threw an envelope upon his desk. A glance at the handwriting told him that it was from Armstrong.

“MY DEAR REVERE,” it ran, “I have made an attempt to have Sophie allow me to do her justice, but she would not listen to a word from me. She says she hates me, and does not believe a word I say, and that I am probably meditating more mischief. In some unaccountable way, I mentioned the fact that you knew all about the affair and that you approved of my marrying her. She seemed to be all taken aback when I told her this, and berated me for a scoundrel, for having revealed the story to any one ‘not that I care about Mr. Revere knowing it, but you might tell it to others,’ she said to me. She seems to have a high opinion of you, and I see no better way out of the difficulty than for you to talk to her. I would not ask any one else to do such a thing, but I feel differently with you. What do you say? If she will marry me, I’ll follow your advice and let Lily go. In fact, I now very much wish to do so, for, after all, Sophie is really my wife, by all moral laws—strange as it may seem for me to speak of morality. I saw you at the ball last night, but couldn’t

stay long, because Lily became ill and I had to take her home. You might tell Sophie that the quicker she takes me the better, for Lil is just death to my finances. Some one is having a good time!

"Seriously speaking, though, I wish you would have a little talk with Sophie and show her how wrong she is.

"Trusting you can see your way clear to doing so, I am,

"Very sincerely yours,

"FRED ARMSTRONG."

Revere frowned as he finished reading the note.

"Nice commission for me," he muttered.

Still frowning, he entered the elevator—to find himself face to face with Sophie. She colored as their eyes met, and his face became no less crimson.

"Are you on your way uptown, Miss Duval?" he asked, as soon as they had reached the ground floor.

"Yes," she curtly replied.

"Shall we go up together?" he gently inquired.

"If you please."

In the elevated car both remained silent for

some time. Finally Revere resolved to make a decisive stroke.

"Miss Duval," he said, "I received a note to-day concerning you. May I speak to you about it?"

For a moment she did not reply.

"It is not necessary," she finally said, "I know what it is about."

"Are you angry with me?" he asked.

She raised her head quickly and laid her hand on his arm.

"Not with you," was her simple answer.

"Thank you," he said. Then he fumbled in his pocket and took out Armstrong's letter.

"May I give it to you?" he asked.

"Is it necessary?"

"I think it best."

She took the envelope.

"And you approve of it?" she asked.

"Do you not think it most logical?"

"But do you approve of it?" she insisted.

"How could I, in justice to you, do otherwise?"

"But do you think that I—I ought to—to marry him?"

"Is it not best?"

“But do you think I ought to?”

He saw what she wanted him to say and he found he could not say it.

“It is true, he is not worthy of you,” he stammered, “but is it not the best reparation——”

She would have none of that, however.

“I care nothing for that,” she exclaimed, “only tell me—do you think that you really want me to—to become that man’s wife for—forever?”

It was evident that she restrained her tears with difficulty.

“Eighteenth Street!” the guard called out.

She rose before he could frame an answer, and with a hasty “good-day” left the car.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A QUESTION OF PRINCIPLE.

PROMPTLY at eight o'clock Revere entered the reception room of the X—— Club. Keene was there before him. In a few minutes the two friends were comfortably ensconced in a cozy corner, off the main hall. Keene lighted a cigar, and nestling back in the cushions, looked at Revere from between his half-closed eyes.

“Guess what’s coming,” he said.

It was a great habit of Keene’s, asking people to “guess” things. He ascribed it to his Yankee blood.

“You wrote it was about Miss Powell?” Revere replied.

“True. But what do you suppose it is?”

“Give it up.”

“I thought so. Well, candidly, tell me what you think of Miss Powell?”

"Rather a comprehensive question."

"Granted. Still, what do you think of her?"

"I suppose she's good enough, for a woman of her class. But I should think you'd know more about such things than I."

"Nonsense! I want you to analyze Miss Powell, as far as you know her. I have a purpose."

"Beg to be excused. I know nothing at all about the lady."

"Well, since you won't generalize, I'll have to go at you with particulars. Primarily, then, what do you think of Miss Powell's external appearance?"

"I should say she's a pretty woman."

"Good. What do you think of her conversational abilities?"

"Yery good."

"Another point. What do you think of her temper?"

"Give it up. It takes more than two interviews for a man to judge a woman's temper."

"M—m—m. Wisely put. Now, we'll turn our attention to a nearer personage. Do you think I'm a fool?"

"Hardly," Revere smiled.

"Thanks. Do you think I am possessed of my share of the world's good things?"

"I should infer so."

"And now—do you think I ought to get married?"

"To——"

"To Miss Polly Powell?"

Revere drew a long breath, but did not reply.

"You do not answer," Keene said.

"I have nothing to say."

"But you must! I insist. Remember, I do not speak to you as I would to any ordinary man. I want you to speak out of the depth of your heart, Revere"—Keene leaned over and laid his hand on Revere's shoulder. "I want you to speak to me as a true friend. I have done nothing in the matter yet. I want to know how it will all seem to others. Don't let any false delicacy stand in your way. Speak to me honestly and frankly."

Revere was touched by his straightforward appeal.

"My dear Keene," he replied, "what you ask me to do is impossible. It is not a man's province to analyze for another man the woman he loves."

"But I put it in your province."

Revere shook his head.

Keene persisted.

"Think of the circumstances," he urged, "I am no callow youth. Whatever I do now will be done for life. I respect your opinion, and I beg you to express it. The marriage I speak of is not an unusual one, but it is a risky one. You know me, you know the woman. I insist upon your telling me what you think of it."

Still Revere hung back.

"If I said anything," he replied, "it would not be because of my opinion of either you or Miss Powell. The opinion I hold in the matter is general, and applies to no one personally. It might be unjust in your case."

Keene was now determined to hear what Revere had to say. After some further urging, Revere finally surrendered.

"Very well, then," he said, "if you will have it so, I'll tell you what I think of marriages with off-color women—so to speak. But understand—it is an opinion in general, and is applicable to no one in particular."

"I understand that."

"Well, it may interest you, then, to know

what my ideal of a woman is. The woman whom I count fit to become a man's wife—and to make him happy through life—is one who, above all things, possesses that one great quality; stability. Given a woman without that attribute, and she is not the one to make a man happy. She may appear all that is good and perfect—she may love with her entire soul—she may strive all her lifetime to be a fit mate—but it is useless. She is bound to give way under a test.

“Now, a woman who has once shown herself capable of sinking her moral forces under the flood of temporary enjoyment—to use a figure of speech—is certainly not in command of the desirable amount of stability. Hence, she is not the one to be a good man's good wife.

“All this, of course, is outside of one's own feelings. Personally I cannot imagine myself in any sort of relation with a woman who has once made the fatal step—the selling of her immortal soul for temporary enjoyment. I might”—he quickly added, a sudden thought striking him—“forgive a woman who has been led astray though no fault of her own, but

where a woman has once held her head up before the world as a willing factor of her soul's destruction, I have no mercy. That summarizes my opinion."

Keene heavy a heavy sigh.

"I—suppose"—he slowly replied, "that—you—are—right. But, I am no saint myself, and she has reformed completely. She's given up everything, without my asking her to—just because she knew it pained me. I know she loves me as she has never loved any one, and yet I hesitate."

He chewed his cigar contemplatively for a few moments.

"It's queer, too," he suddenly began again, "I've thought several times of asking her to come to live with me as my—my—you understand?"

Revere nodded.

"But I can't do it. Somehow or other I can't bear to think of her that way. It's queer, I know, but when it comes to the woman one loves——"

Revere looked up at him feelingly.

"I understand," he answered.

"She hasn't been well of late, either,"

Keene went on, "I don't know what the matter is with her—something to do with the lungs, I think, and what with one thing and another, I can't make my mind up to do anything."

Again silence prevailed. Keene was the first to break it.

"Well," he said, in a cheerier tone, "we'll see what time will bring. I'd like to have you see her again, though. She thinks a good deal of you. Can't you make it convenient to come to the opera with us some night?"

"Perhaps, if you think it best."

"Then it's a go!"

CHAPTER XXX.

“WHY ARE WOMEN BAD?”

It was a clear, crisp, slightly frosty day, and Revere, hurrying up Twenty-third Street, was about to cross to the north side of the way, to get out of the crowd of shoppers, when he found himself face to face with Elaine.

“John!” she exclaimed, holding her hand out to him, and his heart bounded with joy as he took it in his own and passed it through his arm. She was on her way uptown, she said. Would he care to take a short stroll through the park?

Accordingly they were soon whirling up Fifth Avenue in a *coupé*. At Fifty-ninth Street they left the conveyance and took the path to the lake.

Elaine was more charming than ever. Revere could hardly convince himself that this glorious woman, hanging so lovingly on his arm, was actually his own—all his own!

"And how are you getting along in your work?" she asked.

"Pretty nearly through," he replied. "I shall probably hand it in to the publisher I told you about in a couple of weeks. I think I stand more chance there than anywhere else. It is so difficult to force an entrance."

"But I am sure you will have no difficulty," she naively exclaimed. "You are not of the ordinary sort, you know, John, dear."

"Tush, tush, darling," Revere interrupted, "you will turn my head if you go on at such a rate."

"Oh, but I couldn't."

"Couldn't?"

"No, I couldn't turn *your* head," with a mischievous little twinkle in her eye.

"You little tease," he replied, "if it wasn't daylight and there were not so many people about, you'd pay the penalty for going on in this fashion."

"What would you do?"

"H'm, can't you guess?"

"Impossible!"

"Well—" he looked about him quickly, and seeing that they were for the moment out of

sight of passers-by, caught her in his arm, "I'd do this!" and his kisses rained upon her face.

"You horrid boy," she pouted, as he set her free. "You've disarranged my flowers!"

"I'm sorry—" he began.

"Oh, are you?"

"No, no," he corrected himself, "I'm glad."

"Because you've put me to the trouble of rearranging them?"

"No, but because you are the sweetest little girl on earth!"

She pressed his arm.

"But, John, dear," she archly said, "that wasn't punishment at all!"

By this time, Revere was in a perfect ecstasy of love, and he fairly thrilled with rapture as he gazed into those blue eyes, almost on a level with his own.

"You angel," he murmured, "what would I do without you?"

"Don't think of such a thing," she replied, "because, you know, you are not without me."

Which sage morsel of advice he hastened to adopt,

"By the way, darling," he said, "I have the queerest thing to tell you. I really don't like to speak of it, but it's so curious."

"Then I must know it," was her imperious reply.

"Well spoken! You see, little girl, I sometimes have to go to very bad places, you know, for the paper, and when one goes to bad places, one sees bad people. Well, I saw one woman at those places twice whose figure was so nearly like yours that I was really jealous. Of course you'll pardon my mentioning those things to you," he explained, seeing her blush and then become pale, "but you know, I like to tell you everything I can—especially that which concerns you."

She nodded her head.

"Yes, of course, John. But you don't like those women do you?"

"You foolish little girl! Of course I don't. They're bad—thoroughly bad. Decent people don't even speak to them, you know."

"Are there such bad women?" she asked, her voice quivering just a little.

"There," he said, noticing her agitation, "I shouldn't have spoken to you about those

things. They're not fit for you to know about, dearest."

"Oh," she replied, "but I do like to know about them. I—I am interested, you know. Why do women become bad, John, dear?"

"For many reasons. Sometimes it runs in the blood."

"Then the whole family is bad?"

"Generally. One can't be too careful."

"How fearfully you put it, John," she said, nestling closer to him. "Do you think you could ever love me if I were to become bad?"

"Don't speak such nonsense, child!" he exclaimed, his face paling. "You are a little angel, and nothing bad can come near you."

She gave a short laugh.

"Now it's you who are flattering," she faintly replied.

He noticed the change in her voice.

"You are ill, darling?" he asked.

"No, no," she replied, "only tired. Let us go out of the park. I'll take a cab home."

They turned back toward the south gate.

"Pretty soon," he said, as they walked along. "I hope, dear, you will 'go home' no longer, but 'come home.'"

She blushed and smiled.

"Yes, John," she replied, "and then you will be 'the famous Mr. Revere.' "

"But better still, I'll be your husband, darling."

She pressed closer to him as he pronounced the word "husband."

"Yes, dear," he continued, "would I could be in the place of my friend O'Tear, who is to become a husband to-morrow. He is one of the men in the office and has been separated from his sweetheart for fifteen years."

"Fifteen years! That's a long time to wait!"

"But they love each other—almost as well as we do—possibly. And we won't have to wait so long, will we?"

A slight pressure of his arm was the eloquent answer, and as he put her into a carriage at the Eighth Avenue entrance to the park, he felicitated himself on being loved as he was.

"Before long, darling, before long," he whispered, and stood back as the carriage started off uptownward,

CHAPTER XXXI.

A WEDDING.

WOULD that Apollo were a Tammany officeholder, for then his good-will might be purchased and his lyre induced to thrill forth a glorious pæan of joy in honor of the culmination of true love's triumph. Then would this pen fashion cunningly worded sentences, and the heart of the reader would swell with gratulations for the long-waiting bridegroom and faithful bride.

But Apollo lies hidden somewhere in the Elysian Fields, probably taking a Rip-Van-Winkle-like slumber of twenty or thirty centuries—till the faithless shall again worship at the feet of the thunder-compelling Jove and the lovesick at the shrine of ambrosial Venus. So the intended verse must, perforce, still remain the uneven prose, and the description of the joy of the occasion be intrusted

more to the reader's active imagination than to the writer's sluggish pen.

No priest or minister tied the fateful knot that gave the charming Alice to her adoring James, but the stern exponent of the Law, as exemplified in the person of a popular alderman, acted as Hymen's plenipotentiary in the premises.

Everyone was there—that is to say—everyone who amounted to anything in the office. Timbers was there—resplendent in a tight-fitting frock coat, a clean shave, beautifully striped pale blue trousers and a mirror-like silk hat. Then there was Miss Overley, gorgeously arrayed in an impossible dress of her own creation, the most conspicuous part of which was a high collar almost concealing the back of her head—and boasting of any amount of frills and pleatings and other mysteries of feminine apparel, hanging lovingly on the arm of Mr. Duffit, who, contrary to expectation, looked anything but happy. But O'Tear had decided that he must be there to witness the height of his happiness. "For," reasoned he, "if it hadn't been for the supper I should never have got into

the hospital, and never have seen Alice, and—" but there all thought of possibilities ended.

There, also, was Miss Duval, charming and *chic* as ever, bustling about the bride and declaring that she simply must not tire herself out and compelling everyone to do something toward bringing order out of chaos, and causing O'Tear to declare that he didn't know what they should have done without her, which remark caused her to blush most divinely, and order him to stand out of the way and not gossip.

And then there was Revere, next to the bridegroom, only, in importance, and quite as useful as Miss Duval herself, steering poor bemuddled O'Tear around like the big happy baby that he was, and whispering to him every few minutes, to "cheer up, old man, it'll soon be over," in the most encouraging tone imaginable under the circumstances, considering that the occasion was so grave.

Then, too, there was Joe, radiant in the splendor of a white apron and very smartly polished boots. Who was equal to him in importance as he hurried to and fro carrying plates and bottles and glasses and trays?

"Git outen de way!" he politely cried to the majestic Miss Overley, as she happened in his road, "dis is 'rush' copy, dis is!"

And Miss Overley "got."

As for O'Tear himself, he was beyond description. He was superlatively happy. To him the whole world was one great big, immense, overwhelming mass of happiness, and he let everyone see that such was the fact.

Of course there were the others, lesser lights of the staff. There was the honest, warm-hearted sporting editor, and the tall, thin and cadaverous financial editor, and numerous reporters and artists, all arrayed in the very nattiest of black suits, with the whitest of white collars (one can't guarantee the shirts, Chinese rates positively are so high), and immaculate neckties and gorgeous diamonds (quality not vouched for), and the cleanest of clean shaven faces—those who didn't wear beards—all solemn and important-looking, as befits guests at so momentous an event, and all anxious to impress upon the others that they were quite old friends of the groom, as was but natural.

So, then, at last the line of march was laid

out, and the portly city father took his stand at the upper end of the "parlor," and Timbers very gallantly gave his arm to Miss Deane, and Revere performed the same—not at all unpleasant—duty for Miss Duval, and the others tried to form in file behind, and before they knew it found themselves all together in a bunch in front of the august, though smiling, representative of the municipality; and before he quite knew what was happening to him, O'Tear was answering "yes" every time there was a long, breathless pause, and before long Revere had forgotten just which pocket he had put the ring into, and everyone said "ah" when he produced it from the pocket he was sure he had turned inside out at the very beginning, and the bride held out every finger but the right one, and O'Tear would persist in trying to stick it on her thumb, and finally it was all adjusted and the jolly alderman was kissing the bride, and every masculine guest was wishing he was the alderman, and everyone was shaking hands with everyone else, and Miss Overley was declaring it was "so very simple" and Duffit was "begging to differ" which she did not allow him to do, and

Joe suddenly found himself the hero of the hour and acquitted himself nobly, breaking only four platters and three bottles, "which wasn't so bad, considering," and everyone swore 'twas the happiest and jolliest wedding they had ever seen.

So they all ate and drank and made merry, and even Miss Duval toasted the bride and bridegroom, and Duffit, especially, paid such ardent court to the various bottles that it soon became impossible for him to attend to either Miss Maria Ann or anything else under the sun, and Joe slyly upset the contents of the salt cellar into his glass when he wasn't looking, and Duffit swore he'd never drink wine again, and promptly went to sleep in his chair. Then everyone drank everyone else's health, until the bride arose and went to change her toilet for a traveling gown.

Then everyone else got up, too, and Miss Duval went to help Alice, and Miss Overley, after trying in vain to rouse Mr. Duffit, sailed off in a high dudgeon. Then the beaming groom came and thanked Revere for all his kindness, and Revere protested that he had never enjoyed himself more in his life, and

O'Tear asserted that he was the happiest man in the world, and that he was unworthy of it all, and almost cried as he spoke, upon which Revere passed his arm around him and told him not to be a big booby, while his own eyes became quite damp, on account of the atmosphere, of course, and then the bride came out, looking prettier than ever, if possible, and the newly-married couple proceeded down the front stairway, between the two lines of interested and gaping neighbors, big and little, and any amount of rice was showered on them, and any number of old boots thrown after them, and the driver, cunning fellow—he'd tied a wedding favor to his whip—whistled to his horses and the wheels revolved, and away they went, two loving souls united at last, two hearts intertwined by the loved bonds of wedlock.

Then Revere locked up the rooms and escorted Miss Duval to her home.

CHAPTER XXXII.

BREACH OF PROMISE.

ARMSTRONG was in despair. While the youthful Lothario had looked upon himself as more or less of a martyr when he first decided to follow Revere's advice and offer marriage to Sophie, her refusal had put an entirely new face upon the matter. Finding himself disdained, Armstrong had begun examining the girl, whose betrayer he was, and the closer he examined her, the more he cursed himself for a fool.

In short, Armstrong was slowly but surely falling in love with Sophie, not the kind of love he had known hitherto, but a firm, true passion, founded, as all true love must be founded, on respect, as well as adoration of the loved one.

But the more devoted he grew, the colder Sophie became, if such a thing were possible.

Did he plead with her? She laughed at his avowals. Did he urge her to look after her own interest in the matter? She derided his sudden self-sacrificing tendencies. Did he urge her to think of her name? She asked him why he had not thought of it before. In short, she showed him plainly that she did not like him, could not tolerate him, and would never surrender to him.

And yet Armstrong persisted with the tenacity which intense love alone can create.

Revere had long since informed Armstrong that he could do nothing. And immediately after she saw him abandon the campaign, Sophie became Revere's fast friend again. Requiring no like return from him, she gave him all her confidence. Once in awhile he would try to make hay for his friend, but she would immediately freeze up and become unapproachable.

"Can't you do anything at all?" Armstrong asked Revere one day.

The latter shook his head.

"But she must do it in the end, you know," Armstrong burst out. "She belongs to me rightfully, you know, and I am resolved to

have her. Good Lord, man, I never had any idea that I could go so crazy over any woman, let alone Sophie."

"You'll have to bide your time," Revere suggested.

"Bide nothing! I want her just as soon as I can get her, and there is no time too soon for me!"

And there it ended, for the time being.

"You do not dare tell me," Sophie had said to Revere one day, "that you are convinced I ought to marry Mr. Armstrong. Were you to tell me so, I might consider the matter, but you know that you really don't think so," and the appealing look in those melting eyes had effectually prevented his saying anything more. After all, she was the one most concerned, and if she did not want to do it, what right had he—a perfect stranger—to dictate?

So he became her protector and adviser. He looked upon himself as her brother, and found it pleasant to do little things for her and to help her where masculine help was appreciated. And she—she just drifted on with the tide—content to enjoy the momentary peace the quiet, uneventful life she lived

afforded her. He never took her to any places of amusement, he never spoke to her in any other than brotherly fashion, and she—but who can fathom the depths of a woman's heart?

Meanwhile Robert Keene, Revere's other lovesick friend, seemed to be just as little favored by fate. A day or two after O'Tear's wedding, Revere had received the following note:

“MY DEAR REVERE: I am afraid that I shall have to cancel the invitation I gave you to the opera. Miss Powell, whose illness I have already mentioned, has been rapidly growing worse and worse. It's too bad, too, for you would have had a chance to meet Miss Degraw, in whom you seemed to take so much interest the night of the French Ball. She generally goes out with Miss Powell, unless Armstrong accompanies her. As it is, however, I very much fear that Polly will never leave her room again.

“Poor little girl! She is paying a heavy penalty for the few bright hours of her short life! The doctors have at last agreed that she is suffering from consumption. Of course, they say there is every hope, and all that, but I think that they are keeping back from us the fact that it is not the simple disease, but that

terrible galloping variety of it! I have seen it before, and I know what it is.

"I am very glad that I am by her side now to cheer her and aid her. She believes, poor girl, that she will be up and about soon. But I know better, although I hope that my predictions may not be verified. This is real 'hoping against hope!'

"This is all I can say now. As I write, Polly asks me whom the letter is to and on hearing it is for you, blushes, and wishes me to send you her regards. She'd write a line or two herself, but she is too weak.

"Drop in, some day, old fellow, and cheer us up. We need it badly enough. I have established temporary quarters for myself in the house adjoining hers. You'll always be welcome. Sincerely yours,

"ROBERT KEENE."

Revere had paid a visit to the sick girl and found that Keene had in no way exaggerated the state of affairs. The hand of the dread disease had fallen heavily upon her and had robbed her, even in that short while, of the greater part of her freshness. Her erstwhile rosy cheeks were already pale, her satin-like skin shriveled, and the whole countenance changed from healthful brightness to the sal-

lowness of disease. A curious little lump had come in his throat as he had bent over the emaciated girl to bid her good-day. It was such a change!

At the same time, matters of no little moment were occurring in the office. A most astounding rumor had been put in circulation. It was said that Miss Overley was about to sue Mr. Duffit for breach of promise of marriage!

In order to thoroughly understand the evolution of the affair, it will be necessary for us to go back to the time that Duffit kissed Lily Degraw in Armstrong's conservatory.

While he had made his peace with the injured host, Duffit had not quite given up the idea of getting Lily away from his friend some day.

As long as Armstrong remained the incarnation of goodness to Lily, Duffit had no chance, of course, and the latter drew all the fun he could out of his affair with Miss Overley. When Armstrong, however, began to feel his love for Sophie revive and expand, he naturally became somewhat hard to get along with at home, and Lily became restive. Duffit was quick to take advantage of the situation and at

once dropping Miss Overley, devoted himself exclusively to Lily.

Perhaps it was this sudden desertion, perhaps it was the sight of Alice O'Tear's happiness, or perhaps it was the result of long and profound meditation—it would be hard to tell which. Anyway, Miss Overley decided it was time for her to take action in the matter. She consulted counsel and was assured that she had any easy case. She took several days to think it over. Finally she decided to mention it to Duffit before proceeding.

Unfortunately for himself, she struck him just when he was recovering from a prolonged morphine debauch. He cursed her for a d—d fool and told her she was old enough to be locating a grave instead of looking for a husband; and what was still worse, that she looked like a mummy.

Miss Maria Ann might have forgiven anything but those two last expressions. She became resolute on the instant. Mr. Duffit should feel the weight of her anger! The suit was instituted.

Of course, everyone talked about the affair, but the culminating point came when a very

suave little gentleman appeared at the office one day and very generously presented every member of the staff with a crisp one-dollar note, and an accompanying subpoena to appear as witness for the plaintiff in the case of "*Overley vs. Duffit.*"

No one had any objection to the dollar bill—not at all—but the subpoena: that was quite a different affair.

Timbers, like the executive power that he was, was the first one to take action in the matter. He immediately called a counsel of war and put the question before the assembly; what stand were they to take in the case?

And now Duffit reaped the harvest of his sowings. Had he been a man popular with his fellows, there is no doubt that the crowd would have decided to stand by him; but as it was, they resolved to remain neutral, which meant a virtual victory for Miss Overley.

Revere, on his part, cared but little about the outcome of the affair. He had seen enough of the workings of the breach-of-promise laws to be thoroughly disgusted with them.

"I could understand," said he, while dis-

cussing the matter with O'Tear, "a law which grants protection to women who are betrayed under promise of marriage; but a law which is simply the resort of blackmailers, disreputable women and shameless creatures who are only too eager to put a money value on their affections is quite beyond my comprehension."

"Aren't you a little too harsh?" O'Tear asked.

"Perhaps. But what do facts show? Do you not know as well as I do that it is, nowadays, almost impossible for a man to exchange a dozen sentences with a girl without running the danger of having a breach-of-promise suit on his hands? And who are the women who sue? You know, as well as I do. They call it 'outraged affections.' Bah! How would the world look upon a man who were to sue a wealthy girl for fifty thousand dollars for having 'outraged' his affections? And why does not the rule work both ways, if it is a rule at all?"

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE VERDICT.

DURING the interval between the serving of subpoenas and the day of the trial both Duffit and Miss Overley found it convenient to absent themselves from the office. Finally the fateful day arrived, however, and those of the witnesses who were to be examined first were in the courtroom early. But Miss Overley was there before them all. She had, apparently, expended all her ingenuity in one supreme effort to appear ravishing. The result was truly astonishing. While it is a matter of grave doubt whether Miss Maria Ann succeeded in her prime aim, it is certain that she succeeded in attracting any amount of attention, which, in her case, amounted to the same thing.

Before long Duffit lounged in, with a great show of being quite bored. He appeared

rather more sallow and worn-looking than ever, and frequently tipped back in his chair in order to whisper a word or two into his counsel's ear.

At last court was formally opened, and the lawyers cleared their throats and everyone leaned forward with renewed interest, and the choosing of the jury began in the usual manner, with the ordinary amount of squabbles and challenges and sharp questions and still sharper retorts.

Finally all the preliminary difficulties were over, and the senior counsel for the plaintiff made his opening address to the jury, describing in fervid terms the youth, innocence and beauty of the plaintiff and explaining how the defendant—that monster in human form—had blasted the life and hopes of this fair and lovely maiden, and had made, for her, all the future a barren and dreary waste. The senior counsel for the defense naturally “objected to the gentleman on the other side summing up in advance” and “begged to have stricken out” and “excepted” to his heart's content, and the whole crowd had warmed up to the work in hand quite nicely, when Miss

Maria Ann Overley was called to the stand as the principal witness in her own behalf.

Then what a tiptoeing and craning of necks there was and how everyone watched Miss Maria Ann as she strolled toward the bar and how everyone snickered when a court officer barred her way and bade her go, *via* the rear of the jury box and how everyone laughed when she stopped to expostulate and how solemn everyone became when the judge pounded his gavel and ordered all disorderly persons removed! But before long Miss Maria Ann was in the chair and had kissed the Bible quite emphatically, and had given her name and address to the stenographer (as if he did not know the former, already!) and had arranged her dress in its required folds and had given the senior opposing counsel a most withering glance, Mr. Duffit a contemptuous one and the presiding judge a sweet one and the jury an appealing one, all in their due order.

What a masterly lawyer hers was, to be sure! How adroitly he drew from her lips various admissions about the defendant's professions of love for her, in spite of her evident modest reluctance.

“Did the defendant, on such-and-such a day do so-and-so and say this-and-that?” he would ask, and she would open her eyes in most apparent astonishment—as if to ask how he knew that such was the case, and would hesitate, and cast her eyes on the ground (metaphorically speaking only) and try very hard to appear coy, and finally yield to the inquisitor’s persuasions and toss her head (monster hat and all) and say: “Yes,” in a gentle undertone which was quite audible at the other end of the room, and then look modest again and gaze at her lawyer in the most bewildered fashion imaginable, as if wondering what on earth that man would ask next. Oh, she was a famous witness, was Miss Overley, and gladdened indeed her counsel’s heart.

But all things human have an end, and Miss Overley’s testimony came to a finish, too. She had managed to inform or, as it was preferred to have it appear, her counsel had compelled her to inform the amazed judge and jury that Mr. Thomas Duffit had declared her to be an adorable woman, had begged her to share his lot through life, had won her youthful affections and trusting heart and had thrown

both away, crushed and bleeding, immediately after.

Then John Revere was put upon the stand. The questioning of the lawyer for the plaintiff elicited the facts that he had heard of Mr. Duffit's praising Miss Overley's profile, had seen them sit at the same desk quite close to each other, and had seen him kiss the plaintiff on the lips at the French Ball. The lawyer for the defense, of course, on cross-examination, did not fail to bring to light the facts concerning Miss Overley's station in the office, the standing joke about her sudden conceit, the fact that Mr. Duffit was quite intoxicated when he *was kissed* by Miss Overley, and that kissing was a promiscuous feature of the latter part of the social function in question. And the spectators, of course, did not fail to laugh when the counsel for the defense emphasized the fact that it took a very much intoxicated man to pluck up courage enough to kiss the plaintiff, and Miss Maria Ann looked daggers at him, and the judge pounded with his gavel harder than ever, and the trial proceeded.

Thus proceeded the legal farce, with witnesses too much and too little willing,

and the same objections and exceptions and appeals and motions and rulings, until three days had been consumed and all the witnesses had been examined and the counsel started in to sum up.

It is not to be supposed that the counsel for Miss Overley neglected to speak of the "charming young lady who stands before you pleading for justice," and the "tender bruised heart," and the "untrained affections," and all the other stock quotations that go so far toward convincing even the most hard-hearted juryman that it is his personal and sacred duty to see the fair plaintiff well remunerated for "affections wasted," at so much per affection, and the strength of his appeal may only be appreciated by the fact that the counsel for the defense looked quite dejected as he arranged his papers prior to beginning the summing up from his point of view.

Still, he went at it in the best manner he could and he had just swung into the customary denunciation of the plaintiff, when Miss Overley, who had grown very nervous, jumped up all of a sudden, and in her old-time manner and voice denounced the speaker as a liar'

Then there was great confusion and Miss Overley was removed; but the damage was done, and the counsel for the defense did not fail to take advantage of the occurrence and to utilize it in his argument.

When all the summing-up had been finished, the judge looked as wise as it is usual for a judge to look and charged the jury in the most masterly fashion, succeeding in favoring neither side, which was very considerate of him, and the jury went out to deliberate.

What need to describe the period of waiting, or to enlarge about everyone's nervousness and uncertainty and Duffit's fits of shivering and Miss Overley's fits of crying! The fatal knock on the door came, and the jury filed in, expressionless and mysterious-appearing as is the wont of juries, and the judge took his place on the bench, and the clerk called the roll, and everyone strained his hearing to its utmost, as if to catch the sounds before they were uttered, as the clerk asked:

"Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed upon a verdict?"

"We have," the foreman replied.

"What say you in the case of Overley

against Duffit; do you find for the plaintiff or the defendant?"

"We find for the plaintiff," the foreman replied and paused. A shriek of joy rent the air as Miss Overley threw her arms around her counsel's neck, "and," the foreman continued, "we award her six cents damages!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MORPHINE.

THE excitement and gossip following Miss Overley's suit against Duffit might have made things extremely unpleasant for both at the office had not a topic of greater interest come into existence just then.

In the spring of '92 public notice was attracted to what has since become known as the "Parkhurst Crusade." Naturally, the matter was one of the greatest interest to the newspaper fraternity, and formed the subject of almost every discussion in newspaperdom. Raid after raid was being made on various houses in the Tenderloin, and the newspaper men had hard work of it keeping up with the progress of things.

Hence, Miss Overley came off rather easily. She absented herself from the office several days, and then appeared as the Miss Overley of old. Gone were the ribbons and powder,

gone the gay gowns. It was plain, everyday Miss Overley again, who attended to her work as of yore and scarcely paid any attention even to the enthusiastic Mr. Timbers.

As for Duffit, there seemed to be no resting-place for him on the downward slope. The excitement attending the breach of promise suit had driven him more than ever to the use of the life-destroying drug to which he was addicted. As if this were not enough, a fresh blow fell upon him. Armstrong heard from Lily about his friend's doings and forbade him the house. This time there was no prospect of a reconciliation, for Armstrong was himself irritated by Sophie Duval's conduct, and was in no condition to display magnanimity.

So it came to pass that Timbers found Duffit absenting himself from work for days in succession. Duffit's department became a drag on the paper. Complaints began to come in from abroad. The editorial board started asking questions. Remonstrances were of no avail. Duffit seemed to have lost all power of reasoning. One Saturday evening the climax came.

The "typos" were busy preparing the last supplement for the press. Every page except Duffit's was already in the "forms." Word was sent upstairs for more "copy." Duffit mumbled something about "fifteen minutes." The foreman waited that period of time and sent a boy up again. Duffit was not ready yet. Another boy was sent up five minutes later. He reported that Duffit seemed not to understand what was being said to him. The foreman was frantic. Only twenty minutes were left before the supplement had to go to press and not a "stick" of "society stuff" had been set! He flew upstairs himself. Duffit was leaning over his desk. The foreman reached his side. What was this? Duffit's head lay pillowed on his arms, which were spread on the desk in front of him. The frantic foreman shook him by the shoulder.

"Hey, Mr. Duffit!" he yelled.

Duffit's inanimate figure wobbled in the chair, but there was no answer. Several of the men gathered about the desk.

"Shake him again," some one suggested.

The foreman was not unwilling. He gave the man before him a yank that half-lifted

him from the chair. As the body fell back, there came a sharp sound as of something dropping upon the floor, followed by the tinkling of broken glass. Some one directed the rays of a pendent incandescent lamp toward Duffit's feet. There, on the floor, lay a hypodermic syringe, the needle glistening suggestively in the bright light, and the piston pressed down to the bottom, while from a nearby broken bottle a long, sinuous line of fluid traveled across the floor. The foreman picked the bottle up. Around its body was a label, ornamented with the usual druggist's insignia. The lettering on it read:

“MORPHINE.”

That was the last time Duffit sat at his desk in the office. He was taken home and brought out of his comatose condition, but all efforts at reclaiming him were futile. The insidious drug had fastened to him securely, and he slowly faded away under its influence by that gradual but sure process peculiar to the life-destroying narcotic.

CHAPTER XXXV.

“SOME DAY YOU WILL KNOW.”

It would be difficult to say just what Sophie Duval had expected to result from her connection with Revere. Although it is certain that he never looked upon her otherwise than as a pleasant acquaintance, she was by no means satisfied to have everything end there. As the weeks advanced and she saw more and more of him, she became dimly conscious of the fact that the young man was, to her, more than a friend. She found herself eagerly watching for his arrival at the office and regretting his absences from it. She began to find it sweet to exchange a few words with him. But Revere suspected nothing of all this. To him there was but one woman in the world—Elaine. Indeed, even if Elaine had not existed, it was scarcely probable that he would have looked in any other than a brotherly fashion at the charming artiste; for, although he acknowledged her to be quite out of the line

of undesirable women, she was still no longer the pure, undefiled creature that formed his ideal, and to him the Byronic sentiment:

“ Vice cannot fix, and virtue cannot change.
The once fall'n woman must forever fall ; ”

was a stern and inviolable dogma.

The natural result of this condition of affairs was that Sophie began to rebel against the cold, unappreciative attitude of her newly-found friend. Like many another woman, both before and after her, she blamed Revere for his apparent stupidity in not seeing what she wanted, although she would have given her life rather than run the chance of intimating it to him.

What made it more miserable for her was the fact that she had heard something of the story that had resulted in Perry's first chastisement, and yet she could not ascertain whether there was or was not any truth in it. She would have liked to think that it was more or less of an all-around joke, or, at the worst, the story of a passing flirtation. But her heart misgave her at those moments, and she had to admit to herself that there was probably more behind the story than any one knew, and

that Revere's heart was probably already in the keeping of some one more worthy than she.

It takes but little to put a woman in a desperate mood under such circumstances, and without knowing it, Revere himself stumbled into the one action of all which could serve to quicken into life all Sophie's latent passions.

Armstrong's intense desire to do justice to Sophie went a long way toward establishing him firmly in Revere's esteem. Indeed, Revere felt at times like censuring Sophie severely for her unreasonable attitude to her lover; but some sentiment of delicacy or—perhaps of some stronger origin—restrained him for some time. But one day Armstrong complained more bitterly than ever. He spoke of the strained relations existing between himself and Lily, of the elaborate preparations he had made to abandon his old life and to commence a new one and of the cruelty of Sophie's uncompromising attitude.

"Have you sent Miss Degraw away yet?" Revere asked.

"No. But I think the break will come soon. Her demands for money have become enormous and lately I have been compelled to cut the

supply considerably. As far as I can see now it will take very little to declare war. I cannot do it myself, however. I don't think you can understand it. She has been a nice girl as long as I have had her, a real friend and companion, quite out of the ordinary, you know. To turn around all of a sudden and break off is more than I can make myself do. It's out of question. In fact, I sometimes feel very wretched when I think of her going off at all, perhaps to take up with some other fellow—that's the worst of these liaisons. You take up with a girl, and just when you get to like her, to feel that you want her with you, you have to break off and see her go off with some other chap, apparently as happy as she was with you, and as contented."

"Do you begin to regret——"

"No, it isn't that, but—well—just imagine—I think a good deal of Lily. I have loved her and love her now, a little differently from the way a man generally loves his—his mistress. Well, man, can't you see that it is somewhat bitter for me to think of some other man loving her and having as good a right to love her as I had?"

"But other men have had her before you, haven't they?"

"Yes; but the past does not count with me. That is all forgotten. It's the present and the future. We do not live in the past."

"That's where we differ," Revere mused; "the past counts a good deal with me. What has been in the past will be in the future, I believe."

"Possibly," Armstrong replied, "and yet you see that Sophie loved me in the past and——"

"Will love you in the future."

"You think so?"

"I do. She feels that she has been greatly injured by you and ought to receive a goodly amount of urging before trusting you again."

"If I could be sure that was all!"

"Time will show."

"But time is too long."

"Can you shorten it?"

"Perhaps I might, if I went to the attack again myself."

"If you think so——"

"I don't know. Have you talked to her about it of late?"

"Not of late."

"Will you try?"

"I don't know——"

"Try."

"Perhaps I shall."

"I wish you would promise me. You don't know how I am suffering from this uncertainty. If she would only consent and put an end to it!"

Revere smiled at the vacillating little man's avowals.

"Well," he replied, "I'll promise to try for you again. If I do not succeed you will have to map out some programme of your own. Poor little girl! It seems hard that we should be concocting schemes against her in this manner, but I think it is best for her——"

"And for me," Armstrong rejoined.

"And for you," Revere conceded. "You probably don't think it, Armstrong," he added in a livelier tone, "but I can fully appreciate your feelings if you love Miss Duval as you say you do."

"I assure you——"

"Then I am assured! Yes, old fellow, it

will make me happy to see you happy, for I know what it is to love!"

"You?"

"Ask no more. I'll see what I can do for you."

"Thank you. I may be able to repay you some day."

And with this understanding they parted.

As soon after this conversation as was possible, Revere sought Miss Duval and came to the subject of Armstrong's suit as directly as he could. What torture Sophie endured while he spoke to her of Armstrong's good qualities, and claims and rights, no pen can describe. Only one who has experienced the pain of having the loved one extol the qualities of another can appreciate her sufferings at the time. Resentment never entered her mind, however. She only felt that the hand of fate was falling heavily upon her. Still Revere went on, totally unconscious of the havoc he was wreaking.

Then Sophie reverted to her last refuge. Feeling confident that he would never utter the fateful words he had so long evaded pronouncing, she finally asked him:

“Are you, then, firmly and honestly convinced, with your heart and soul, that I ought to become Mr. Armstrong’s wife?”

And he, thinking of nothing but the promise he had given, and the mission he had to fulfill, hesitated a few moments—moments which seemed centuries of torture to the poor girl, and then replied:

“Yes. After mature thought, I have come to the conclusion that it is best and wisest for you to do as he wishes.”

She gasped and turned so pale that he thought for the moment that she was about to fall senseless. But by a mighty effort she regained her self-control, and gazing at him with a world of love and entreaty in her eyes, answered:

“Some day you will learn how mistaken you were—some day when you know more than you do now.”

He looked puzzled.

“Tell me,” he gently said, “has Armstrong concealed anything from me? Has he been guilty of any——”

“No, no,” she interrupted him, gasping a

little, "not he. There is nothing more to know about him."

"Then you"—he began.

"No," she quickly exclaimed, "there is nothing to know about me. But—but tell me," she went on rapidly, "have you ever known what it is to love?"

He colored as she asked the question. What did she mean? Did she have another love affair? Impossible! Did he know what it was to love? Who knew better?

The expression of his face told her more than words could. She fell back and buried the nails of her fingers in her palms.

"Enough," she faintly said. "Go tell Mr. Armstrong that I shall—that I shall be ready whenever he is."

Revere felt surprised when he found himself neither jubilant nor even satisfied at hearing her pronounce these words.

"I wonder," he said to himself, "if I have acted rightly, after all."

And he could not decide.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

“DO NOT FORGET ME.”

A SHORT note, informing him of his success was all that Revere could bring himself to write to Armstrong. Hardly had he dispatched it, however, when a message of quite different import was handed to him. It read:

“REVERE: Polly is dying. Can you come?

“KEENE.”

An hour later Revere was at Miss Powell's house.

The servant who opened the door walked on tiptoe and spoke in a whisper.

“Is Mr. Keene here?” Revere asked.

“Upstairs, sir,” was the significant answer.

Revere ascended the stairs. But softly as he entered the room, the sick girl heard him even before Keene did. Her face lighted up.

“Come here,” she said in as loud a voice as

she could command, and stretched her hand out to him. As he caught it, she closed her other hand over his and smiled.

"You haven't been here in a long time," she said.

"I had hoped to hear—" he began.

"Of my recovery?" she interrupted. "You were foolish."

"Polly!" Keene reproachfully exclaimed.

She smiled a little. "See the foolish boy," she said, nodding toward Keene. "He is sorry to have me go."

"Don't talk in that fashion, Polly, dear," Keene begged.

Polly looked at him affectionately.

"I won't tease any more, Bob," she replied. "But give me a little more of that medicine. I want to feel stronger, so that I can talk."

"But you will exhaust yourself."

"No, no. Please!"

Keene gave her a teaspoonful of the concoction.

"There," she said, "now I shall feel stronger. Bob, dear," she went on, "I wish to speak to Mr. Revere all alone for a few minutes. Will you let me?"

Keene looked pained.

"Is it necessary?" he asked.

"I'd like to."

He bent over and kissed her.

"Have your way, little girl," he said, and turning to Revere, "be careful with her, old fellow, won't you?" he asked. "Don't let her exert herself too much."

Revere nodded, and Keene walked out of the room. Then Polly had Revere prop her up with some extra pillows, and again taking his hand between hers, smiled and began:

"What do you suppose I want to speak to you about?"

"I am sure I do not know," Revere replied, "but I shall be happy to hear whatever you may have to say."

"Now, don't be conventional," Polly said. "I want you to talk to me unreservedly. You know what I mean. Will you promise?"

Revere promised.

"Well, then," Polly resumed, "I am going to speak to you about something—something you do not expect. Do—do you recall that night I—I—we first met?"

"I do," Revere quietly replied.

"Well, then, I wish you to forget it."

Revere felt his heart contract within him as he saw and understood the pleading look in her great eyes as she pronounced these words.

"I will forget all about it—I have forgotten it," he almost whispered.

Two great big tears rolled down her cheeks as she pressed his hand, and a slight wave of color passed over her face.

"Because," she went on, as if she was continuing her sentence, "I have tried very hard to forget it myself. It was such a terrible night! I—I had been bad before—quite bad, but always for fun, you know, never for harm. I don't know what prompted me to do as that creature asked me to. It was so—so bad."

"He is paying to a higher power," Revere said.

"I know. I have heard. But it is of you I want to speak. I want to thank you for the way you treated me then. You don't know how I felt. You can never know. For I was but a woman after all—and you were the first one to treat me as such in a long while. I really don't know how I kept myself from—from crying right out there."

She fell back among the pillows, and great tears gushed from her eyes.

"It-is-no-no-thing," she murmured. "The—wa-ter. Some—wa-ter."

He held the glass to her lips and she took a long draught. The fluid seemed to revive her, for she motioned him to take the glass away and again grasped his hand.

"I feel—better—now," she said, "and I want to—to finish while—while I can."

He bent over to hear her better and she continued, in a lower tone:

"I decided to change that very night. I decided to be worthy of your treatment and I dreamed that if I did so I might, perhaps, deserve to hold your hand the way—the way I am doing now—when I was on my deathbed. I knew that I couldn't last very long—women like me never do."

He could hardly restrain his own tears as she spoke, and almost unconsciously he brought his other hand on top of hers and pressed it with all the fervor of his soul. Her eyes lighted up at this and she moved her head nearer to his.

"Thank you," she murmured, "it makes me

so happy. I shall tell Bob. Poor boy! He loves me so! I know he will be very unhappy when I am—am gone. You will look after him, won't you? I—I don't want to be the cause of any more unhappiness than I can help. He—he loves me so. But it is best as it is, don't you think so?"

He did not answer, but looked at her with a world of pity in his eyes.

"Yes," she replied to her own question, "it is better so. I have told him so, but he would not believe it. But I—I know. He wanted to—to marry me, you know, to make a good woman out of me. Dear Bob! But it would not have been good. I know how it is. While I was new to him it would have been all right, but after, when he would come to think of the woman he had given his name to, it would have been different. He would have been unhappy, and I too, and there would have been no help for it.

"I have seen like things before. It doesn't work. No, no. It would not have been good for Bob to marry me—and yet he loves me—I know he does. And otherwise he would not

have me—he loved me too much—I know. So it is best as it is, isn't it?"

What could Revere say? He could only press her little hands and soothe her.

"Now, now," he said, "there is no use speaking about those things now. It doesn't matter, you know—it is not necessary."

"Ah," she replied, "but I wanted to tell you—so that you might know—I thought you might think that I was trying to snare him, you know, as some women might. Now you know, you understand. You do not think badly of me, do you? I have tried to do well ever since—since——"

"I know, little girl," he said, seeing her hesitation. "I understand. Don't think that I do not understand, I know you a little better than you think. You were different then, and you are different now. Believe me, I understand everything."

"I see now that you do," she replied, "I am happy, I feel easier now. You will talk to him about me sometimes, after I am—am gone, won't you? I don't want to think that he will forget me altogether, or that you will, He has been my only friend——"

“And I—” he corrected.

“May I?” she asked. “And you, then. You have been my only friend and led me to try for a better life. I don’t want to think that when I am buried, and no more like what I am now, when I can no longer speak to you, and hear you, and feel you, and see you, that you will think of me no longer. I want you to promise me to come to—to—my—my grave”—a sob half stifled the word—“once in awhile, and drop a flower upon it—I love flowers—and possibly speak my name to Bob and think of me as—as you saw me when I was beautiful and young. It won’t be so bad going away then; it won’t seem so lonely, I think. I think I shall know when you are there, and I think I shall hear you call my name—and I shall feel happier.”

The tears were streaming from her eyes as she fell back upon her pillows again, and the moisture welled in Revere’s eyes as he bent nearer to her.

“Don’t—don’t cry—Jo—John,” she murmured, and as he clasped her hands closer with a convulsive tremor, she raised her eyes to his and whispered:

“Kiss me—as you would your sister, John, before—you—call—him.”

And he reverently bent his head to hers and touched her lips with his as one kisses a thing holy and sacred, while her arms stole around his neck and she clasped him to her.

When Revere called Keene in, a few moments later, she was resting, with her eyes closed, and a happy look on her wan face. She remained thus a little while, and then, opening her eyes, looked at Keene. He came to her.

“What is it, darling?” he asked.

It was some little time before she could use her voice.

“Bob,” she finally murmured, “I—shall—be—gone—soon. Think — of — me — sometimes. I—love—you, Bob; I—love—you.”

“My darling! My own love!” Keene cried passing his arms around her frail body and gathering her to him, “don’t speak of leaving me, Polly, dear. You must not, you must not, my angel!”

She pressed her cheek to his.

“It is—better—as—it—is,” she murmured, “I—am—happy—now—dar-ling,” and while

he still held her in his arms, exhaustion mastered her and she sank back unconscious.

A hurry call was sent for the doctor, and that functionary came in twenty minutes later, just as Polly was opening her eyes again. He examined her a few moments and then shook his head.

"There is nothing more to be done," he said.

Even as he spoke, her fingers were busily picking away at the bedcover. Her breath came in short, quick gasps. She seemed to want air. Suddenly a gleam of intelligence showed in her eyes. She looked, first at Keene and then at Revere. Both bent over her from the different sides of the bed. She moved her hands a little, as if she would raise them.

Both men divined her purpose on the instant, and each caught the hand nearest to him between his two. A smile of contentment fitted over her lips.

"Bob," she whispered, and then "John." But even as she spoke the words, her fingers stiffened. A convulsive movement shook the whole body. The two men bent closer; her

eyes became fixed, and with a last gasp, Polly's body sank back.

The troubled spirit had flown to another—perhaps a brighter and happier domain.

—

CHAPTER XXXVII.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.

THE arrangements for Polly's funeral occupied quite a little of Revere's time during the ensuing three days, for Keene was hardly aware of what was passing about him, so prostrated was he by his darling's death. There was no one else to do anything in the matter, for, as is usually the case in such affairs, no one knew anything about Polly's antecedents and no one appeared to put in any claim for her body. When it was all over Revere returned to his desk, and plunged into work as an antidote for the gruesome events of the week. He had not seen Armstrong since the day he had gained Sophie's consent to become Mrs. Armstrong, but from the few words he had exchanged with the artiste, he knew that the bridegroom-to-be had called, and was then perfecting arrangements for the marriage.

Sophie had respected Revere's evident concern at Polly's death, for he had informed her that a friend of his had passed from life, and as Revere felt very little like talking during the following week or so, nothing more of consequence passed between the two.

Meanwhile events of no little importance were transpiring in the office under Revere's very eyes, so to speak, without his knowing it.

It would be difficult to say exactly why Timbers did it, but he did, and the fact stands pre-eminent. It was the last thing in the world any one would have expected!

Possibly it was because he had become tired of chewing tough beefsteaks in expensive restaurants, or perhaps it was because O'Tear's example was too tempting to be resisted, or it may have been for any one of a dozen different reasons, but Timbers arose one morning to find himself under a solemn engagement to marry!

In order that we may be able to get some idea of the course of events that led to this extraordinary condition of affairs, it may not be amiss to go back and pick up one of our threads where we left it.

When Miss Overley (there, the cat's out of

the bag now!) came back to the office after the termination of her suit against Duffit, she became as we have already remarked, quite a model of simplicity again.

"Mr. Timbers," she said to that gentleman one day, "do you remember that time when you asserted that I was not beautiful and I took offense?"

"I do," was the candid answer.

"Well, I take it all back. I am quite convinced of the truth of your statement as made at the time."

Timbers struck his hands together.

"Miss Overley!" he exclaimed, "you are a sensible woman! You're a brick!"

Miss Maria Ann looked gratified.

"Thank you, Mr. Timbers," she replied, "but I have something more to say. Do you remember a certain number of photographs which were once brought to this office by me?"

"Of profiles and three-quarters? I do."

"Mr. Timbers, they are no more. I had a bonfire yesterday. My room was quite warm when it was all over."

Timbers was in an ecstasy.

"Miss Overley!" he exclaimed again, "you are the most sensible woman in the world!"

"Perhaps," she calmly replied, "but I desire no more compliments, Mr. Timbers. I wish you to consider me the same as I was before—before——"

"The photographs?" Timbers prompted.

"The photographs," she assented. "I am ready to do hard work again."

"And to drop the pronoun, first person singular?"

"And to drop the pronoun, first person singular."

"Then, Miss Overley," Timbers cried, "I can only say that you are a bird, a honeysuckle of the first water and a diamond from Luluville! And any man that says otherwise is a d—d liar!"

And so it began.

The developments which followed were but natural. As has already been hinted, Timbers had experienced no little feeling of jealousy when the intimacy between Miss Overley and Duffit had first begun. At the time, however, his disgust at the woman's conduct had mastered all else. But now he saw her struggling

to regain her former position, in his estimation, at least. He saw her hard at work, day and night, knowing no rest, heedless of exhaustion, forgetting even that hitherto paramount thing with her—the “I,” for the time being; and he pitied her, and said to himself:

“Poor thing! She’d be a d—d nice woman if she didn’t have to earn her own living!”

Probably this thought was the first step toward the final declaration. Timbers felt himself growing old, day by day. He began to appreciate the utter loneliness that falls to the lot of the old bachelor, and it is not to be wondered at if, after awhile, his eyes rested with more than ordinary interest on Miss Overley.

After all, she was a woman who could understand him, he said to himself. She knew his work and its hardships. She would not be difficult to get along with. Love? The time had long since passed for that. It was a question of convenience now.

“By the jumping candlesticks, I’ll do it!” Timbers finally exclaimed.

And he did.

How he watched for the favorable opportu-

nity, and how he questioned Miss Maria Ann, and how he gradually worked around to the great question, and how he finally put it, and how Miss Overley was overwhelmed, this time with *real* surprise, and how she suddenly burst into a flood of *real* tears, and how she protested that she never, never, never, was worthy of him, and how he swore most fervid oaths that she was mistaken, and how she finally acknowledged that she did think more of him than of any other man in the world, and how she said "yes" in the tiniest of whispers when he pressed her for a final answer, and how he forthwith proceeded to store away a prodigious amount of liquid refreshment without suffering more than a minimum amount of the subsequent penalty, would make too long a recital to set forth here in detail. Suffice it that it all happened, and that they both agreed to keep it a deep secret until the day before the wedding, and that Timbers did not fail to keep his part of the compact—for three hours and fifteen minutes—after which everyone in the office showered the couple with congratulations and even little Joe swore that he would follow the general example and get

married to his Sally right off, if his salary would only be raised "ten shillin's a week more, fur," as he put it, "us bach'lors won't be in it no more, if t'ings goes on dis way."

Which sentiment the hastily assembled council of office boys, printer's devils and galley-slingers heartily approved and forthwith agreed to at once seek for suitable "best goils" to share their lots without kisses in life.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE WORLD IS MINE!

REVERE's fateful day arrived. Neatly tied up, there lay before him a bulky manuscript, the result of many months of faithful toil. In a few moments it was to pass away from his hands, to undergo the ordeal of the "reader's" perusal.

It had been a hard task, the completion of this volume. The steady routine of a newspaper man's life is not favorable to the development of the author's talent. It takes a will above the ordinary, and an instinct well rooted to throw off, during spare hours, all thoughts of the news and its requirements and to concentrate one's best thoughts on a subject foreign to the doings of the day.

That Revere was able to do this, was probably more owing to his dissatisfaction with his mode of life than anything else. The ranks of the newspaper profession contain too

many examples of men who have started in the work with the idea of graduating into the higher sphere of pure literature, but have found the difficulties too hard to overcome, and discovering, in their occupation, an easy, if somewhat uncertain, means of earning a livelihood, have remained there, forever, reporters with "assignments" or special correspondents with "missions."

But Revere had, from the very first, looked with aversion on the newspaper man's mode of life, and had determined, from the first day he had entered it, to seek the quickest possible way of leaving it. To him, neither the tinsel of Bohemianism, nor the happy-go-luckiness of hand-to-mouth existence appeared in any other than their real aspects.

Therefore, having long had in mind a certain plot and accessories which, it seemed to him, if put before the public in adequate shape, would arouse a new train of thought and prove of general interest, he at once applied himself to the task of involving it and committing it to paper.

But even while in the midst of his work, the constant fear haunted him that he would never

succeed in getting the volume put before the reading public. For Revere appreciated too well the difficulties to be encountered in endeavoring to have a "first production" put into type. The story of the prejudice which exists everywhere against a "first novel" is already well known. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if Revere constantly expressed to Elaine the fear that his novel would never see the light of day. Sometimes he would console himself with the stories of those productions which have, in their day, passed through the hands of dozens of publishers and been ignominiously rejected, only to become wonderful successes when given to the world; among which is the example of one book, which, after traveling from publisher to publisher for years, had, when finally accepted, a circulation next in number only to the Bible!

So, it was with no little trepidation that he awaited the decision of that mysterious functionary, the "reader," after he had dispatched the manuscript to the publisher who, Elaine had agreed with him, was the most likely to accept it. What restless days and sleepless nights were those, during which he awaited

the result of his venture! It meant so much to him! If it was published, it meant the first firm step toward an ultimate literary career; it meant Elaine for his very own, it meant the abandoning, of this dusty, noisy, heartless town and a return to the primeval simplicity of his own Western home, to meditation and study and further labor in the field of letters.

Ah, it meant so much!

So, he waited. And one day the answer came. He took the sealed envelope and dared not open it. He examined the superscription, as if he he would snatch from it the secret of the inclosed lines. What was it? Was it the stereotyped refusal and request to call for his manuscript? Had the battle all been in vain? Would the package have to travel from one house to another; was his hope to slowly die away and leave him at last, a withered, broken man, with no past and no future?

These and many other thoughts of like import passed through his mind as he fingered the envelope. At last he determined to wait no longer and with shaking hands tore the top off and extracted the folded sheet.

Quickly he straightened and smoothed it out. What did it say? That he should call! Call to do what? Take the manuscript? No, to talk about it, "for it had received favorable consideration." Favorable consideration! Then there was hope! It might yet go! Thank God!

Revere sank down in a chair and buried his face in his hands.

There was hope! there was hope! he said to himself.

How swiftly Revere flew to the offices of the publishing company may well be imagined. There he was cordially received by the manager, who introduced him to the "reader" and several other potentates of the sanctum, and then they adjourned to an inner office to discuss terms.

As Revere had himself foreseen, he was no match for the business-like manager, who, as it was, however, appeared more than ordinarily generous in his concessions. All in all, Revere felt as if he were walking on clouds when he had finally bidden the gentleman good-day and was pacing along the street again.

How bright the world appeared that day, how happy the faces of the passers-by! Although it was yet early in the spring, the trees appeared full of caroling birds. There seemed to be intoxication in the atmosphere and joy permeated the air.

“What a happy world this is!” Revere said to himself.

Even Sophie at the office appeared happy that day. She was packing all her belongings, when Revere entered, for she was to be married to Armstrong soon, and to her and her only did Revere confide the secret of his success.

“Just imagine!” he concluded, “it is to be rushed at top speed and may be out within a month from to-day!”

And Sophie congratulated him and appeared happy for his sake while he was looking at her, but her eyes filled with tears when he turned away, and her heart ached with anguish.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE CUP AND THE LIP.

NATURALLY, Revere sought Elaine early the following morning and found her at their usual rendezvous. How beautiful and lovable she appeared as she hastened forward and put her hands into his.

"You have something to tell me," she said, "I can read it in your eyes."

"You are a prophet as well as an angel," he replied. "I have something very nice to tell you."

"Then tell it quick."

"Right away. The book is accepted!"

As he said this he slipped his arm around her and drew her to him. She nestled closer and raised her laughing eyes.

"I knew it would be," was her simple answer.

"And are you glad?" he asked.

"Why should I be otherwise?"

"Because, you will have to pay the penalty of my success, you know."

"The penalty?"

"You fail to grasp? Don't you know what the penalty will be?"

Still she looked puzzled.

In the very heart of the Ramble there is a small artificial imitation of a cave, which offers a resting-spot quite secluded from observation.

Thither Revere drew Elaine, and throwing himself on the seat beside her, took her hand in his.

"Elaine, dear," he said, "shall we get married as soon as my book is published?"

She colored and drooped her head, but did not reply.

"Shall we, Elaine?" he urged.

For a moment she remained silent. Then she raised her head. Her face was pale now, and there was a piteous look in her eyes.

"Do you think it best?" she asked.

"Do I think it best?" he exclaimed in surprise, "why should I think otherwise?"

She seemed to struggle with herself. Once her lips parted, as if she were about to speak,

but with a supreme effort, she restrained herself.

“What is it, darling?” he asked, encircling her with his arms.

Still she did not reply. A sudden shudder ran through her frame, and she made as if to draw away from him, but he held her fast.

“What is it, darling?” he asked again.

She lay passive upon his breast now. A world of love swelled his heart as he beheld her supple from reclining there; that loving and lovable creature, all his own, his very own.

“Tell me, darling,” he urged again, “what is it that is troubling you?”

At last she answered:

“John, dear, you have never asked me about my people, you——”

“Tut, tut, darling,” he interrupted, “is that all? What matters it?”

“But,” she went on, and the words fairly stumbled, one over the other, so impatient did she seem to utter them, “but you think that my people are great and of social standing, and that we are rich and that I am——”

“Nonsense, dear,” he interrupted, laying his hand on her mouth. He thought he saw

what it all was about now. She was probably the daughter of some man of the middle classes, and feared that he might have thought otherwise. What a dear little stupid she was!

"Nonsense, my dear," he said, "what do I care for your people or their riches? It is you I want, and you are richer than Croesus and higher in birth than any queen ever was. As for money the publishers have surprised me by paying me ten thousand dollars down for my book, beside my royalties. So, let's put an end to it all right here. You are my own darling little innocent dove, and I care not one continental who your grandfather was. There, darling, does that satisfy you?"

"But——"

"No buts, dear. That is all there is to it. Now let's talk of pleasanter topics. Your ancestors put out of question, will you, darling, be my little wife?"

She hung her head.

"Still unconvinced, eh? Well, let me put it in more glowing colors. Supposing that three weeks from to-day we were very quietly to get married, and at once leave this horrible city and go away—far from the world. You

drop a little note to your ancestors telling them that you are busily engaged in being happy, and we go to my home and live there forever and ever amen?"

She looked up at him quickly.

"Forever?" she asked.

"Yes. Why—do you love this horrible city so much?"

"I? No. And you would never want to come here again?"

"Never. You don't like the city, then?"

"No, no," she replied.

"And you will come with me?" he asked in a lower tone, passionately clasping her to him.

Her arms slipped about his neck.

"I will go with you, John—my—my—husband!"

"My angel!" he whispered, "my love, my love!"

CHAPTER XL.

“BEFORE THE CLOCK STRIKES TWELVE.”

SOPHIE DUVAL had left the office as quietly as she had come to it. No one knew why she was going, and she did not enlighten any one. She has a better position, some said. Others guessed that she was going to stop working, still others that she was to be married, but no one knew just what she was going to do, and in a day or two everyone had forgotten that she had ever existed.

All but Revere and—Joe. This urchin had taken a great liking to the artiste. She was a woman different from those he had been accustomed to see, either at home or in the newspaper offices. Her gentle ways and kind words were a revelation to the sturdy boy of the streets, who had known nothing but cuffs and kicks ever since he could recall any memory at all, and who had conceived the idea that a

woman was either of the scolding, howling, slatternly virago type, such as he saw at home, of the no less unpleasant, loveless, man-aping and uncompromising type, such as he saw at the office, or of the superhuman, begowned and be-spangled and painted and powdered, unapproachable type, such as he sometimes read about in the "sassiety" page of the paper.

So, when Sophie appeared on the scene, with her gentle manners and kind words and loving pats, Joe found that he had discovered a new sort of woman, a creature quite out of the ordinary run of humanity.

And he worshiped her, in his own peculiar way. For Sophie there was nothing he would not do. Sophie always had the cleanest desk and easiest chair. No one was ever allowed to disturb Sophie's things, and when Sophie was at work, no one of the other boys was allowed to skylark near her.

"Youse kids keep away from 'er!" he had ordered.

And respecting his well developed muscles, they kept away.

When Joe found that Sophie had really left the office for good he was inconsolable.

Naturally, he sought his only other friend in the office.

"Mister Revere," he said, "d'ye t'ink she went off 'cause any uv de mugs 'ere made it hot fer 'er?"

"No," Revere replied, "she left because it was best for her."

"I wants ter know," Joe said, "'cause, ef it's any uv the blokes eroun' 'ere, I'll jest go fer 'em."

"For all the men?"

"I don't care! Ef I cain't lick de big 'uns, I'll wait till I grows up!"

Revere could well sympathize with the boy. Even to him, the office appeared lonely, now that Sophie was gone. He had often enjoyed sitting back in his chair and watching the girl's profile as she bent over her board and worked away, unconscious of observation. It had been a relief to him, when, in a moment of fatigue he had gone over to her and exchanged a sentence or two. Her sweet voice had soothed, and her calm demeanor rested him. And now, he would look up from the paper before him, and glance toward her desk, as if expecting to see her still there, and a feeling

of disappointment and desolation would sweep over him when the empty chair and litterless desk met his view.

Revere had heard nothing from Sophie after she had left the office, and it was with no little satisfaction that he beheld Armstrong come into the room one afternoon.

"Well, Armstrong," he asked, "how is everything getting along?"

"Tip-top, old man, tip-top," Armstrong replied, heartily shaking his hand. "All arrangements have been made. The wedding is to-morrow. I would have invited you, but Sophie didn't want any publicity, so I had to give in. We'll just go over to the church to-morrow afternoon and get married and then we'll be off for a long trip to Europe, while my man here is fixing up a house for us."

"That's right, Armstrong," Revere replied. "I thought at first you might want to take Miss Duval to the same house you occupy now, you know, and——"

"No, certainly not!" Armstrong exclaimed, "couldn't think of it, you know. She'll have a house all to herself, from the cellar to the roof."

"I approve the sentiment. By the way, what port do you sail for?"

"Havre, French line, you know."

"Then you'll have an acquaintance of yours for a traveling companion. Keene has decided to take a trip abroad for his health, and sails to-morrow on the French line, too. But look here, where are you living now? I may want to send in a thing or two, you know——"

"Why," Armstrong replied, "the same place, you know. You have my address. Come to think of it, though, you never have been up to my place, have you?"

"What do you mean?" Revere exclaimed. "Do you mean to say that you are still living with that—that woman? On the eve of your marriage?"

Armstrong hung his head.

"Well, you see," he began, "'twas kind of awkward, you know. I—I didn't want to say anything to her, you know—I just thought I'd sail off and leave her in possession and so escape all unpleasantness, you know—I—I——"

Revere's eyes fairly flashed fire as he looked at the stuttering man.

“Armstrong,” he said, “I never thought you were such a coward! Don’t flush up, man! What is this you are doing? Living with a dissolute woman till the very morning of your marriage to a girl like Sophie Duval? Armstrong, aren’t you ashamed to look her in the face? Do you intend to go from the arms of your mistress to the altar of God?”

Armstrong was fairly overwhelmed by this torrent of expostulation, that swept from Revere’s very soul. He stood, with hanging head, and said not a word.

“Bethink you of what you are doing, man,” Revere urged. “Is it honorable, is it manly, is it honest? While you are talking to Sophie Duval about wedlock and justice, you are keeping a woman without a soul in luxury and affluence! Do you think I would have urged that pure girl—for to you she is as pure a girl as any vestal virgin—to link her life with yours if I had known you were this sort of a man? Think, Armstrong, what an injustice you are doing to her, to yourself and to me? Do you not think I shall feel guilty if I allow this to go on? Man, man, what are you thinking of?”

Like a dog who has received a severe whipping from the man he acknowledges his master, Armstrong stood and offered not a word of remonstrance or defense.

"What are you going to do, Armstrong?" Revere asked, in a calmer, though harder tone.

"I don't know. I didn't mean any—any harm, you know—I didn't think it would appear so—so—so bad. I never thought of it at—at all, you know. It never struck me—I—I never imagined——"

"But what are you going to do now?"

"I don't know. I—I'll—I'll do anything you say," Armstrong finally cried out, "if you only won't interfere and stop the marriage. For heaven's sake don't do that! Sophie is not over-willing as it is, and if you but say a word, she'll call it off, I am sure. And I—I love her to distraction! I love her more than ever I loved a woman in my life!"

"So much so that you still continue with your mistress? What are you going to do, I ask you again?"

"Anything you say."

"Will you swear it?"

"I swear it."

"You'll do just as I tell you?"

"I shall."

"Very well then. To-night that woman must have left your protection. You understand me? To-night! To-night, I say, before the clock strikes twelve!"

"To-night?"

"This night! Do you swear?"

"But——"

"There is no 'but.' It is either 'yes' or 'no.' "

"Can't I leave the house to her and go elsewhere?"

"And thus leave root for a possible future reconciliation? No, Armstrong, I know you better than you do yourself. You must summon the courage to take the step. I don't care how you do it, but you must. If Sophie isn't worth the sacrifice——"

"Yes, yes, it isn't that, but——"

"But it is hard? That's where the sacrifice comes in. Men have been called upon to do greater deeds for the women they have loved. There is no backing out, Armstrong. Either you'll do it, or you won't. Which is it?"

"I—can't—I——"

“You refuse?”

“No, but——”

“You have sworn!”

“I—I——”

“Yes, or no?”

“Well, then, yes! I’ll do it, if I have to wring myself inside out. I’ll do it! Is that enough?”

“It will be. Remember, to-night, before twelve, she must have left your house and presence, forever!”

“To-night, then. Before twelve she will have left, I will have seen the last of her.”

“Forever?”

“Forever.”

“You swear?”

“I swear.”

CHAPTER XLI.

THE LAST ASSIGNMENT.

"SAY, Revere," Timbers called out.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you want to stay on night duty to-night, or would you rather come on early to-morrow?"

"Just as you say. Is there anything special on for to-night?"

"There's a bang-up raid on the slate. Those Parkhurst chaps have been raising the devil of a row and I've got a quiet tip on a big raid that's coming off to-night. It may be a scoop, too. I don't think any one else has been let in."

"What sort of a raid will it be?"

"Up in the Tenderloin, of course. Almost half a block is to be rounded up. Say, it's a good thing for that chap Armstrong that he cleared out of the house you saw him in. It's

one of the holes they'll pull. Good thing his girl is out of it. She's a d—d nice looking bird, she is. Lily, her name is, isn't? Lily De—De—De—something."

"Degraw?"

"That's it. Lily Degraw. They've all got those kind of names—English nobility or French nobility or something. Yes, it's a good thing she's out of it, although the place isn't half so bad; but it'll go down to-night. Do you care to do it for us?"

"Well, unless you insist, I'd rather not. You know you promised that the French Ball would be the last of this sort of work for me. Can't you let me come on early to-morrow morning?"

"All right, have your way. But you'll have to do the police court work for it if you go on to-morrow morning. I wouldn't trust it to any one else."

"We'll compromise on that, then."

"Wait 'till I put you down on the schedule. So. Now I want to speak to you about another matter. Have a cigar. No? H'm. I'll have one myself, then. To come to the point, how do you like the position of best man?"

"Best man?"

"Yes, at a wedding."

"Oh, I see. You are about——"

"To be joined in the bonds of matrimony and all that. Wedding comes off next week, dead sure. Miss Overley's ready. Now, I want you to act as my best man. What do you say?"

"I say yes with all my heart! Let me congratulate you!"

"Don't mention it, dear boy, don't mention it—I mean, it's all right—thanks."

"I'm glad it's coming off so soon," Revere said, "for it will enable me to officiate."

"What do you mean?"

"I'll be off soon."

"Wha-at? You're going to leave?"

"Precisely."

"H—l, man, what's the cause? Aren't we treating you white?"

"It isn't that, Mr. Timbers. The treatment I have received at your hands has been characterized by nothing but kindness. I am going to leave simply because I am tired of the work, and I shall soon be able to get along without doing it,"

"How? Is any one putting you on at reading copy? If that's what you're after, I'll find a place for you here."

"No, Mr. Timbers, I am going to drop newspaper work altogether."

"What are you going to do?"

"Write."

"What?"

"Books, if I can."

"There's no money in it, I can tell you right now!"

"I'll have a try, anyway."

"Well, have a try. But when you get tired just come back to us. You'll always find your place vacant."

"Thank you."

At this moment O'Tear passed the desk.

"Hey, Jim!" Timbers bawled out.

"Well?"

"What do you think Revere's up to?"

"Something big? What is it?"

"He's going to leave!"

"No-o?"

"Fact."

"You're not really going, are you John?"
O'Tear asked.

"In a couple of weeks."

"Well, 'sufficient to the day is the evil thereof,' as the preacher said last Sunday——"

"Wha-at!" Timbers howled again, "you—you Jim O'Tear, don't mean to tell me that you go to church Sundays?"

"Fact," O'Tear humbly confessed. "It isn't my fault, though. It's all on account of Alice. Lots of fun! Ever tried it?"

"Who, I? Not for a decade. I in a church? Gosh! Like to see myself!"

"Come next Sunday. We'll find a place for you in our pew."

"Pew? Holy jimmanetties! Worse and worse! Do you mean to stand there and tell me that you—you own—pay rent for—claim possession of a pew—a church pew?"

"Guilty, yer 'anner," O'Tear mimicked.

"Well, then," Timbers groaned, "I give you up. You're past redemption! Keep on as you are going now and I don't know where you'll fetch up! Pair of tin wings and a catgut lyre, probably. A pew! Oh, Lord! A pew—just imagine! Jim O'Tear and a church pew!"

CHAPTER XLII.

AT MIDNIGHT.

THE task Armstrong had undertaken was no easy one for him to execute. In his innermost soul Armstrong really felt more than the ordinary amount of affection and regard for his mistress and it was, therefore, with no little dismay that he contemplated the step he had committed himself to take as he walked up Broadway after the stormy interview with Revere. The more Armstrong thought over the matter, the more complex it appeared to him. Why should Revere have taken so obstinate a stand? Surely, a day more or less of association with Lily would in no way affect his future relations with his wife. It was absurd on the face of it!

The logical side of the question never struck him. It was entirely foreign to his nature, habits and customs. But he determined to

think the matter over at some length before taking the decisive step.

Accordingly, he made his way to his favorite clubhouse, and in the seclusion of one of its oriental corners, began to philosophize in the Dutch fashion, *i.e.*, with the aid of bottle and pipe. Hour slipped by after hour, and soon several old cronies joined him. Eight, nine o'clock passed. Armstrong was feeling quite indignant at the position Revere had taken. The idea of his dictating in such a fashion! It was preposterous! So said the pipe; so reiterated the bottle. And so did another, and another.

At half-past nine Armstrong was resolved that he would ignore Revere altogether. It was all nonsense, anyway. The next morning Sophie would be his wife. Then, where would Revere come in? What had Revere to do with it, anyway? Sophie knew a good thing when she saw it. Of course she had seemed reluctant, but that was a girlish trick. She would have consented in the long run, without Revere. He had not done much.

But stay a new idea struck him. What was Revere's aim in all this, anyway? Was it not

possible that he was looking out for himself, after all? How now? Was it not possible that Revere wanted Sophie for his own wife? Why, otherwise, should he try to put difficulties in the way? Good idea, b' Jove! That was it! Revere had repented of letting Sophie slip through his fingers, and would probably take advantage of his (Armstrong's) slight inconstancy to besmirch him in Sophie's eyes and eventually to win her for himself. Why hadn't he seen it before? There was the plot, as clear as it could be. He must be up and doing. He must put Sophie out of Revere's reach. Oh, he was worth two Reveres, he was, if it came to that!

Ten o'clock! Only two more hours left! Well, he wouldn't do it. He simply wouldn't! His own plan was far more rational. A little note—a year's absence, no tears or scene—Revere was a rogue!

A quarter past ten! Only an hour and three quarters left. And was Revere standing outside his house, waiting, watching, expecting? An hour and three quarters! It was too late now, anyway. He never could explain it all

to her in that short while. Things would have to take their own course now.

“Remember, you have sworn—to-night—before twelve—she must have left your house and presence—forever!”

What were those words that came, floating as in a mist? Armstrong played with his glass.

“Brace up, old man, have another,” one of the boys urged.

Armstrong shook his head. He heard other words. They seemed to come from everywhere—from nowhere. What were they?

“To-night, then. Before twelve she shall have left, I shall have seen the last of her.”

Who had said that? The words seemed to shape themselves in his mouth. He even started to repeat them. Had he uttered them himself? Had his tongue pronounced them? Why had it? Why had he not stuck up for himself? Why had he been such a coward? It was all Revere’s fault. Revere——

“Forever?”

“Forever.”

They had both said it. He had pronounced

the word after Revere. It was Revere's fault——

“You swear?”

“I swear.”

Who had sworn? Not Revere. But he—what had he sworn? “Forever—out of the house—before twelve—to-night.” He had sworn! He had given his sacred oath! “Before twelve!” And it was now—now—ten—no—half-past—half-past ten! Half-past ten! Only an hour and a half left!

“Waiter! Waiter! Check! Carriage!”

Men started from their seats and looked after him as he reeled through the rooms. “Loaded,” they murmured—and forgot about him. But he kept on. Faster, faster; the minutes are precious. He had given his oath! He, Fred Armstrong, son of a good father. His oath! Faster! There, where is that carriage? Ah, there it is. Now, my man, five dollars if you reach my home in twenty minutes! Ten dollars if in less! Get up! Clatter, clatter, clatter. Whirr, whirr, whirr. Jaggedy, jiggidy, jump. Sway, lean over now on this side; now on that. Leap from cobblestone to cobblestone, turn sharp corners.

Now on the Boulevard. Away! Nothing in the way! Go, cab horses as you never went before! An oath! An oath to be redeemed! A woman to be pacified—all before twelve o'clock. Barely an hour and ten minutes now. Faster, driver, for God's sake, faster!

The clocks were sounding the hour of eleven when Armstrong flung himself out of the carriage, threw the driver a bill and ran up the stairs of his house. He did not attempt to use his key, but pulled the bell as it had never been pulled before, and cursed audibly while waiting for the servant to open the door. Armstrong had sobered considerably during his ride and was now in that condition of semi-intoxication in which all things appear in an intensified light. He realized more than ever the immense task he had to perform within less than an hour, and cursed his stupidity in not having got at the work before.

At last the door creaked, groaned and opened, and Armstrong rushed into the hall, dropping cane, hat and coat as he flew along. Up the stairs he went, leaving the servant gazing after him in open-mouthed astonishment, and fairly burst into Lily's room.

Lily had apparently become tired of waiting for Armstrong to return, and was just beginning to prepare herself for the evening's repose when he appeared. She started and grew pale at his unceremonious entrance.

As for Armstrong, he stopped short after making two or three steps and looked blank. Lily was the first to break the silence that ensued.

"For heaven's sake," she asked, "what has happened?"

Armstrong worked his fingers convulsively.

"A-e-e-a-e"—he began.

"Well? What is it?" she interrogated.

"E-E-a—d-d-don't un-und-undress!" he stammered.

"Why not?"

"You—are not—not going to s-sleep h-h-here t-t-to-night."

"I am not going to sleep here to-night? Why not?"

Why not, indeed?

"Be-because. It's—it's—it's impossible!"

She looked perplexed.

"Why?"

He bit his lip and wriggled his fingers and

dug his nails into his palms—then glanced toward the clock on the mantel. It was five minutes past eleven!

“You must not. You—you—I—that is—you—I—we—must—that is—before twelve you—we—that is——”

She had arisen now and was supporting herself by the back of a chair.

“Fred,” she asked, “what has come over you to-night? What does all this mean? Twelve? I mustn’t? What? How? Why?”

He pulled at his mustache fiercely.

“I—I—I can’t help it—really Lil—not my fault, don’t you know. I—I——”

“What? What is it all about?”

His eyes rested on the clock. How fast the hands were traveling!

“Lily, we must part!”

“Part?” there seemed to be no pain in the exclamation—only surprise.

“Yes. It’s settled. You must——”

“What?”

“You must go away. It isn’t that I want to drive you away, you know, but you must.”

“To-night?”

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“I—I—I can’t tell you—that is, it’s too long. Some other time—perhaps—no, we must not see each other again—we—I——”

“Why all this so suddenly?” she calmly asked.

“Because——”

“A woman’s reason.”

“Yes, of course—hang it! I’ll tell you the whole story in a few words.”

“Go ahead.”

“I’m to be—to be m-married to-morrow.”

“Oh!” she drawled.

“Yes.”

“And I must make way for your bride to-night?”

“No, no. She’s not coming here. But I promised to have you go to-night, before twelve—away from me—forever!”

“To your bride?”

“No. Not at all. To a friend.”

“A friend? What?”

“It’s all queer. You won’t understand it.”

“I should say not!”

“He’s queer—a crank—there never was a worse. He made me swear.”

“So serious? And I must leave now, near midnight, because you swore to some drunken comrade——”

“No, no. He—he doesn’t drink,” he eagerly interpolated.

“What a mercy! Well, do you suppose for one moment that I am going to leave the house all of a sudden—at a moment’s notice because you swore to some crank friend of yours—who miraculously does *not* drink—that you would make me do so? Fred Armstrong, what do you take me for?”

“Oh, Lord, the sweetest little woman on earth, if you only will go. Here—here’s a—a thousand I drew this morning for wedding expenses. Take them and for—for heaven’s sake, go?”

She did not refuse the money.

“You were always generous, Fred,” she said, “and it’ll take this to carry me through until I can—establish myself. But I shall not leave the house to-night.”

Armstrong was nearly frantic. He argued, he urged, he offered further inducements.

“No, Fred,” she replied, “I want no more money from you. I have received something

like twelve thousand in the last few months, above my ordinary expenses. I shall willingly leave the house to-morrow morning. But to-night—no!”

“But you can send for all your things—anything you choose—whenever you choose.”

“Of course. But I will not be turned out at this time of the night.”

Again Armstrong implored. He grew frantic when Lily calmly started in to unbutton her shoes. The clock showed the larger hand pointing to the Roman figure eleven. It was five minutes of twelve.

“Oh, Lord!” he cried, now in real agony of spirit as well as mind, “what shall I do? How shall I ever have the courage to face him again? Such an oath! Have pity, Lily! Oh, Revere, if you could only see this!”

She straightened up as if an electric current had passed through her.

“Who did you say—to whom——”

“Revere—he helped me get my wife—John Revere—I swore to him.”

“He—helped—you — get — your — wife?” she slowly repeated. Then jumping up from the chair she had dropped into, she hastily

began adjusting her hat. Armstrong could scarcely credit his eyes.

“My cloak, quick!” she commanded. He put it on her as she fled down the stairs; he drew her umbrella out of the stand for her, and stuffed her veil into her pocket, while she was adjusting her buttons, and as he opened the door and she stepped on the outside landing, and said: “Good-by, Fred, I wish you all happiness,” the clock struck the hour of midnight.

He closed the door, re-entered the foyer, and sinking down on the hall chair, buried his head in his hands.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A TENDERLOIN RAID.

WHEN Lily left the house, she had no very clear idea of where she was going to. She turned down Eighth Avenue when she came to it, and walked by the park wall. She seemed to be quite buried in thought and never noticed the occasional male stragglers who threw her a leering "good-evening," or asked if she were not "lonely all alone." When she had reached Fifty-ninth Street, however, she bethought her that it was advisable to look about for a place where to spend the night. Accordingly, she entered a cab and had herself driven to a hotel on Broadway. But the bland night clerk informed her that they did not receive unescorted women at that hour of the night. Trembling with indignation, she re-entered the cab and told the driver to take her to another hotel, a little further down, but the answer she received there was the same. Another and still another

hotel was tried, with the same result. Lily nearly wept with vexation.

"Well," she murmured to herself, "if it must be, it must. For the last time I shall sleep under an unclean roof. Then——"

She leaned out of the cab window.

"Drive to No. — West Twenty-eighth Street," she ordered.

The cabby whipped up his horses.

Arrived at the house in which she had spent the first days of her life with Armstrong, Lily found no difficulty in securing admittance. She was, in fact, welcomed with open arms by the woman who had "kept flat" for her while she had been there.

"Bless your soul, my dear," this woman assured her, as she fairly pulled her into the room, "you're as welcome as anybody ever could be. I'm all alone in my flat to-night, and it's glad I'll be of a little company, especially of company like yours."

Then came the expected avalanche of questions and "guesses" which Lily warded off in quite wonderful fashion, and finally the lights were put out and the two women were soon fast asleep.

"Hey! Open up, there!"

"Open, or we'll break the door down!"

"Open the door there!"

Lily sat up in bed and rubbed her eyes.

"What's the matter, Mrs. Lawrence?" she exclaimed.

"Open the door!"

"Open or we'll bust it in!"

"Hey, open up there!"

Shrieks, stamping of feet, knocking about of furniture, thumps, men's rough voices, women's wild shrieks, seemed to echo from all sides. Lily sat bolt upright and tried to collect her senses. Was there a fire? Was murder being done? What had happened? She heard her companion jump from her bed. A match scratched and lighted, then a gas jet flared up.

Mrs. Lawrence staggered over to the bed. Her face was deathly pale; her lips were blue, and her eyes seemed to be protruding from their sockets.

"Sh-sh-sh—. We're pulled!" she hoarsely whispered.

"What do you mean?"

"We're raided. We'll be arrested. Quick! Dress before they break in!"

But it was too late. One, two, three, blows on the frail door, and it gave way.

"Bah. Only two female birds," the officer in charge grunted. "Come, lively now! Get up and put your togs on!"

Lily remained as she was, literally paralyzed with fear. Mrs. Lawrence blubbered outright.

"Come," the policeman reiterated, "d'ye hear me? Dress quick!"

"But, but, leave the room, we—we——"

"Ho-ho-ho! That's your game, my birds, is it? Leave the room nothing! You just dress and come. 'Twon't be the first time for you, I'll bet."

Lily now found her tongue. "Officer, we will go with you," she said in a trembling voice, "but let us dress in privacy. We are women——"

The officer approached her bed. She shrunk back under his gaze. "Hear her ladyship talk!" he exclaimed. "Look here, I'll stand no funny business, now. We don't *know* you, anyway. You just come along."

Lily heard the emphasis on the word "know." She grasped its meaning. She snatched her dress from a nearby chair

and thrusting her hand in the pocket, drew out the package of bills Armstrong had given her.

"Come, step lively, now!" the officer commanded, laying his hand on the blankets.

She shivered.

"Stay," she cried, and in a lower voice, hastily explained:

"Let us dress in private and two hundred dollars of this is yours."

The policeman changed his demeanor on the instant. His threatening hand fell to his side. But he pretended to hesitate.

"Orders"—he began, his eyes fairly caressing the roll in Lily's hand.

"Three hundred, then."

"We are ordered——"

"Three hundred and fifty."

"I may—I don't—I——"

"Four hundred, for the last time!"

"Boys!" the officer exclaimed, "clear the room and give the ladies a chance to dress."

The subordinates obeyed the order and the squad stationed itself just outside the door, while the two women hastily donned their garments.

"Don't you think," one of the patrolmen asked his chief in a low whisper, "you might let them go at that?"

"Get out!" the former replied, "if they didn't have any more chink I would. But that handsome bird there has a wad as big as your fist. Green as grass, too. I'll get some more tin from her for a discharge to-morrow. The judge'll let them go, anyway."

"What a long head you've got, cap," the junior admiringly responded.

Within an hour, Lily was lodged in a station house cell, awaiting trial in the morning, but somewhat reassured by the officer's promise that, in consideration of two hundred dollars extra, she would be set free by the police justice.

"I'll fix it," he had promised, and as an extra mark of esteem had given her a separate cell to herself.

CHAPTER XLIV.

“ELAINE!”

TIMBERS was jubilant. He had scored a “scoop” of no mean proportions. True, it had come in only in a special three o’clock edition, but it completely “beat” all the other papers. Timbers had slept in the office that night. In the morning he telegraphed Revere to be at the police court early. “Do not miss anything,” he ordered, “spread all you can.”

Revere left his room as soon as he had gulped down his breakfast. Generally it was not necessary to go to the court before ten, but on such orders—no time was to be lost.

A curious crowd hung about the courthouse steps and Revere had to push his way through it. The court room itself had already become packed. Revere made his way to the reporters’ table. He was sick of the whole dis-

mal affair, with the leering aspect of the morbid spectators, the frightened faces of the prisoners' friends, and the self-satisfied air of the portly court attendants.

Hardy had Revere seated himself, and begun arranging his paper, when O'Tear came in—almost breathless.

"The gov'nor sent me down for sketches," he said. "What shall I take?"

"Anything you please," Revere wearily replied. "I don't care. Suit yourself."

"All right," O'Tear answered, "but what's the matter with you? You look glum."

"Oh, I'm tired of all this. I wish the few remaining weeks of it would fly. It's sickening."

O'Tear shook his head.

"Don't throw your dirty water away, etc.,'" he sententiously remarked.

"Good advice, O'Tear; good advice, but wasted on the desert air in this case."

O'Tear began sketching.

Suddenly the murmur of voices, which had kept on uninterruptedly, ceased. A court attendant had banged his fist on a table.

"Order in the court!" he cried.

A side door opened and the police justice hurried in and ascended to his seat.

"Open the court," he ordered.

The crier made his customary proclamation.

The justice appeared out of temper. His eyes were red and his face haggard.

"The old man was out on a racket last night," one attendant whispered to another.

"How many to-day?" the judge querrulously asked.

"About seventy-five, yer 'oner," the clerk replied.

"The devil! It'll take me half a day Call them in squads of six."

"Yes, yer 'oner."

The judge unlocked his desk and took out some official papers.

"Go ahead," he ordered.

The clerk cleared his throat.

"Mary O'Leary, Angelette Le Folette, Genevieve Rembrandt, Lucy Brady, Marguerite Hannigan, and Annie Laurie, to the bar!" he cried.

There was a bustle at the "pen" door and six women marched out. What miserable specimens they were, with their bedraggled

finery and bloodshot eyes and half erased rouge! The older ones of the school carried their heads high, as if in disdain or contempt of their surroundings, while the younger buried their faces in their hands as they went along, their forms convulsing, now and again, with suppressed sobs. How terribly real they appeared and how different from the ideals which many picture them; creatures with some irresistible attractions, almost superhuman, as some put it, in their sirens' charms. Alas, it takes the deceiving glare of artificial light, the brain befuddled by drink and the inordinate activity of all the latent animalism of man to make these unfortunates appear anything else than what they are.

It took the judge but a few minutes to finish with the squad.

"Discharged," he decided.

A sigh of relief sounded all over the courtroom. In her haste to regain the outer air, one of the women stumbled over her own skirt and tore a large strip off the bottom. No one laughed.

"Next!" the judge briefly ordered.

"Lottie Mulligan, Annette Bourrille, Char-

lotte Ledourge, Lena Lieders, Victoria Worcester and Lily Degraw!" the clerk called.

Revere started. Was it possible? Lily Degraw! Was it but a coincidence? Armstrong's mistress! How had she fallen into the toils? He arose, hoping to distinguish the woman in the "batch." The line was just forming. O'Tear noticed Revere's agitation and dropped his pencil.

"What's the matter, John?" he quietly asked.

"Nothing—I"—Revere began, and then he stopped. His body stiffened. His eyes seemed to be growing out of their sockets. There was a movement among the spectators as they beheld the tall figure and specter-like face.

Then, before O'Tear could utter another word, Revere's arms shot out from his sides. His tongue moved.

"Oh! God!" he cried. "Elaine!"

There was a moment's pause, a pause of dreadful silence. Then a shriek rent the air. One of the prisoners reeled and sank to the floor.

"John!" she cried as she fell.

Then, before any one divined what was happening, Revere's hand flew behind him—something gleamed in his hand—was pressed against his temple!

With an exclamation of horror, O'Tear shot his hand out to prevent the intended deed. It was too late! A sharp crack rang out, a flash of fire showed for an instant, and with the blood spurting from his head, Revere sank into O'Tear's arms.

CHAPTER XLV.

AN INTERRUPTED WEDDING.

AT two o'clock of that afternoon, a carriage drew up in front of a church on Madison Avenue. A flunkey jumped down and opened the door and a gentleman stepped out. As he turned back to help out the lady with him, a street arab with a bundle of newspapers under his arm came running up the street and paused for a moment.

“‘Ere’s yer extry! All erbaut de suercide! Read de extry! De court suercide!”

The gentleman had helped the lady out and the two were starting for the church entrance.

“Buy an extry, boss?” the urchin persisted; “all erbaut de suercide in court!”

The lady and gentleman had passed half the width of the sidewalk. The newsboy, seeing no prospect of a sale, started down the avenue.

"Read d' extry!" he yelled, "John Revere shoots hissself in de court! All erbaut de suercide!"

A muffled shriek, a tottering figure, which the gentlman receives in his arms as it sways and sinks back, a discomfited flunkey flying to his master's aid, and the newsboy, attracted by the noise and turning back, all formed a momentry tableau of peculiar interest.

"Sophie, darling," the man was murmuring, "what is the matter, dear?"

Sophie shivered and drew herself up. Her hand clutched Armstrong's shoulder. Her colorless lips moved.

"That boy, what—did—he—cry?" she almost whispered.

But Armstrong had not heard. Other thoughts had occupied his mind. He gazed at her in astonishment and drew her toward the church door.

"Boy?" he exclaimed, "what boy? What has come over you, darling?"

But weak as she was, she resisted.

"The paper," she said, "get the paper!"

"The minister is waiting, love."

"The paper!" she commanded.

Armstrong looked at the flunkey helplessly, and the latter comprehended.

"Hey, boy!" he called.

The flunkey held the paper out to his master. The latter hesitated, and then unfolded it. The word "EXTRA" occupied the two middle columns. Underneath ran the headline:

"SUICIDE IN COURT!"

and under that:

"JOHN REVERE, A NEWSPAPER REPORTER, ATTEMPTS SUICIDE!"

and below that:

MAY NOT RECOVER.

and further on:

"The Suicide Was Taken to Bellevue—The Cause of the Act Unknown—A Tragic Court Room Scene."

All this Armstrong read, but he had hardly come to the last word of the headline when he felt the clutch upon his shoulder tighten. Sophie had read the lines at the same time.

"My love—" he began.

But she interrupted him. Quickly turning about, she ran toward the carriage,

"To the hospital!" she hoarsely exclaimed.

Armstrong paled. He barred her way. A little crowd began to collect.

"The minister is waiting—" he remonstrated. "Sophie—remember——"

But she brushed by him and sprang into the carriage. Her eyes were vacant and fixed. Her lips were white and trembling.

He ran after her and put his head in at the door.

"Sophie, Sophie," he exclaimed, "what are you doing? We are to be married now—everything is waiting; what are you thinking of? Where do you want to go?"

The last words seemed to be the only ones she understood.

"To the hospital!" she again exclaimed.

"Which hospital?"

"Where he is."

"Bellevue?"

"Bellevue."

"But first—the minister——"

She was fast losing the very last vestige of her self-control. Her fingers worked convulsively and she tapped her foot upon the floor impatiently.

"To the hospital!" she cried, "quick! To the hospital!" she almost screamed. Armstrong stood upon the step, hesitating. What was he to do? What was going to happen? What did it all mean?"

"Quick! To the hospital!" she was really screaming now. She half-rose from her seat. The crowd—now considerably augmented—pressed closer and closer. A policeman appeared around the corner. Armstrong gazed about him and—surrendered!

"Drive to Bellevue!" he ordered.

The carriage rattled off.

He was lying, pallid and gaunt, upon the hospital cot. A group of doctors and nurses were gathered about the footboard.

"A most interesting case," one of the doctors was saying. "The bullet just scraped the dura mater and came out again through the upper part of the skull. If his friend had not thrown his arm up as he was pulling the trigger, the ball would have gone right through the brain, doubtless."

"Do you think he'll pull through, doctor?"

"M-m-m. I shouldn't wonder. May have meningitis, though."

"Ah!" a nurse exclaimed, "he's opening his eyes now."

And at the same moment the door flew open, and with a heartrending shriek, Sophie threw herself down at his bed, and the tears—those tears which had so long refused to flow—gushed out at last.

"John! My darling! My love! My angel!" she cried, and fondled his helpless hands and caressed them and kissed them. And a few steps away stood Armstrong, seeming to doubt whether he was awake, and still wondering what it all meant.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE KNOWN AND THE UNKNOWN.

SIX long weeks had passed since that dreadful day; six weeks of lingering which came as near to a fatal termination as it well could without actually having one. Many events of importance had come to pass during those six weeks of which the sufferer had no knowledge. Only once had he regained consciousness during the first few days, and then it was to ask O'Tear, who was at his bedside as often as the rules would allow, what had become of her. And with the tears streaming from his eyes, the old fellow, thinking it best to tell the truth, had replied:

“She is in an asylum.”

And he had understood.

But he did not fully comprehend, at first, the tragedy that was being enacted at his bedside. For Sophie, loving, adoring Sophie,

had found strength in his weakness. How she had accomplished it, no one ever knew, but the second morning after the shooting had found her installed as nurse in his ward!

Vain had been Armstrong's pleadings and remonstrances. She was deaf to them all. She now knew only one thing; that her whole heart and her whole soul belonged to him who lay so pale and uncomplaining upon the white cot, and she knew that she could never more live away from him. And so Armstrong had pleaded and stormed every day, and every day she told him to forget forever what had been.

"Whatever comes," she had said, "I am his—his only and entirely."

And Armstrong had wondered whether this was the same gentle Sophie he had once known.

Revere's book had come out meanwhile, and had at once proven an enormous success. The world talked of the work and its author, and would fain have lionized him.

But he was weary of it all, and as soon as the formalities of the law had been gone through, he determined to go back to his prairie home and there, all alone with his

broken heart and broken life, spend his earthly years.

They took him up tenderly and bore him to a special car. He was still weak and needed careful attention. So he did not object when Sophie begged to be allowed to go along. And Armstrong went too, still wondering how it would all end.

As had been feared, Revere grew worse on the road and was quite delirious when they brought him to his home. So Sophie stayed and nursed him. Three more weeks passed and the splendid constitution and loving care triumphed.

Then came the happy day when he was put into a chair and propped up with pillows and wheeled to the window to inhale the balmy early summer air.

And she—Sophie—with a joyous, though wan and drawn countenance, bent over him and adjusted his coverings. And Armstrong, who had stayed there, too, sat in the background and wondered—still wondered—where it would all end.

“Well,” Revere said, looking out of the window wistfully—as if the swaying branches

and bright sky recalled another scene, "now that I am up again, I shall, I suppose, have to pay the inevitable penalty, by losing for what I am gaining."

"How?" Sophie asked, a startled look coming into her eyes.

"You will be leaving me now, little nurse, and making the faithful fellow behind us happy for life?" And as he pronounced those three words, "happy for life," the tears welled up in his eyes. How often they had used those words!

Sophie shivered slightly and pressed her hand to her heart.

"Leave you?" she vaguely repeated.

Armstrong arose and advanced a step, then paused. Revere looked up at her and read something in her eyes. He caught his breath quickly.

"Sophie!" Armstrong exclaimed, moving toward them.

She turned around like a tigress at bay.

"Once for all!" she cried out, her eyes gleaming with fierceness, "I say to you, no! No! NO! I care not for you! I shall never go with you!"

Armstrong hung his head.

"Leave us, Armstrong," Revere finally said. "Let me tell her something she should know."

For a moment he hesitated, then he gloomily stalked out of the room. With a sigh, Sophie sank at Revere's feet. Revere took her hand and gently stroked it with his own.

"Listen, little girl," he began. "You have never learned why I—I did what I did?"

She shook her head.

"I thought not. O'Tear is the only one who knows. Now you shall know, too, because—because—" Their eyes met and her face became suffused with color, "because I think it is best for you to know."

And then he went on and told her the whole story of his meeting with Elaine, their love, their aspirations, their hopes and plans.

"To me," he concluded, "there still exists the Elaine I knew—good and pure and holy. To her I pledged my faith and no other woman can ever take her place. That is impossible. So I shall remain as I am—loveless and unloved—a wreck—as I am now—alone and away from the world."

Thus he finished, and his head sank upon his breast. Then she asserted herself.

“Oh, God!” she cried, “are you blind that you cannot see? Can I leave you alone in misery—uncared for—unloved? John, John, I love you! Command me, torture me, beat me, but do not order me away from your side! John! My love! My darling! My hero!—” and overcome by her own emotion, the poor, heartrent, loving girl twined her arms about him and pressed him to her with all the convulsive strength of her weakened arms.

It was at this moment that Armstrong appeared in the doorway. He heard the words, saw the actions; and slapping his hat upon his head, he strode off to the railroad station.

He was convinced at last.

Then came the battle between those two left alone. In a battle between a lonely, heart-broken man, who yearns for love as the parched plant yearns for water, and an ardent, loving woman, who asks for nothing but love, who shall hesitate to designate the victor? What could the result be but that his weary head should finally drop upon her bosom and find there its rest from turmoil and trouble and weariness? For it so happened, and glorying in the majesty of her love, Sophie took that poor

head in her arms and declared herself the happiest woman in the world.

And Elaine—Lily? In a sombre ward of the forbidding insane asylum structure she sits, day in and day out and rocks herself to and fro, mumbling words which no one understands. Sometimes she becomes excited, though, and then she starts from one end of the ward, and takes a few steps, and looks up and cries “John!” and falls senseless on the floor. At other times, when there is no one about, she stealthily opens her dress, and produces, from some unknown hiding-place, a longish strip of paper. This she unfolds and gloats over many minutes, and reads to herself many times. The contents? It bears the heading of the X and Y Publishing House at the top, and the body reads :

“Received of Miss Elaine de Gerau the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) in full payment for the publication of the book entitled —————
and the remuneration of the author, thereof, Mr. John Revere, for the first edition according to contract.

“THE X AND Y PUBL’ING Co.’

When any one approaches, the paper is swiftly folded and hidden away, and then she sits down and holds her knees between her arms and mumbles to herself:

“I meant well, John, I meant well. If you only knew!”

But John does not know. There are many things we fail to know during our short life-span and so Elaine still rocks to and fro and talks to herself of what might have been.

And John—is John happy? Who in this world is happy?

Alas, who shall attempt to judge the dispensations which an Omniscient Providence, an unalterable Fate or a non-discriminating Chance, imposes upon mortals?

THE END.

NEELY'S TOURIST LIBRARY.

Paper, Twenty-five Cents.

- No.
1. The White Company. By A. Conan Doyle.
 2. The Deemster. By Hall Caine.
 3. A Romance of Two Worlds. By Marie Corelli.
 4. Treasure Island. By Robert L. Stevenson.
 5. The Sign of the Four. By A. Conan Doyle.
 6. Kidnapped. By Robert L. Stevenson.
 7. The Bondman. By Hall Caine.
 8. Michael Clarke. By A. Conan Doyle.
 9. Sport Royal. By Anthony Hope.
 10. The Man in Black. By Stanley J. Weyman.
 11. Uncle Tom's Cabin. By Mrs. Stowe.
 12. Beyond the City. By A. Conan Doyle.
 13. Webster's Pronouncing Dictionary.
 14. Cosmopolis. By Paul Bourget.
 15. People's Reference Book.
 16. Around the World in Eighty Days. By Jules Verne.
 17. In Darkest England. By General Booth.
 18. Ships That Pass in the Night. By Beatrice Harraden.
 19. Nance, a Kentucky Belle. By Miss Greene.
 20. Mark Twain, His Life and Work. By Will M. Clemens.
 21. Tom Brown's School Days. By Thomas Hughes.
 22. A Holiday in Bed. By J. M. Barrie.
 23. By Right, Not Law. By R. H. Sherard.
 24. The Child of the Ball. By De Alarcon.
 25. Health and Beauty. By Emily S. Bouton.
 26. Lydia. By Sidney Christian.
 27. Rose and Ninette. By Alphonse Daudet.
 28. A Tale of Two Cities. By Charles Dickens.
 29. The Last of the Van Slacks. By Edward S. Van Zile.
 30. Love Letters of a Worldly Woman. By Mrs. W. K. Clifford.
 31. Claudea's Island. By Esme Stuart.
 32. At Love's Extremes. By Thompson.
 33. The Minister's Weak Point. By Maclure.
 34. Rachel Dene. By Robert Buchanan.
 35. Social Etiquette. By Emily S. Bouton.
 36. The House of the Seven Gables. By Nathaniel Hawthorne.
 37. At Market Value. By Grant Allen.
 38. Her Victim. By an Indian Exile.
 39. When a Man's Single. By J. M. Barrie.
 40. A Daughter of India. By An Indian Exile.
 41. Dream Life. By Ik. Marvel.
 42. Reveries of a Bachelor. By Ik. Marvel.
 43. Christopher Columbus. By Franc B. Wilkie.
 44. Dodo. By E. F. Benson.

For sale everywhere or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publisher.

F. TENNYSON NEELY,

96 QUEEN STREET,
LONDON.

114 FIFTH AVENUE,
NEW YORK.

Thomas B. Connery's Novels.

From many flattering press notices those given below will indicate the favor with which Mr. Connery's writings are received by the public:

"ALL THE DOG'S FAULT is a capital book to pass away an hour or two, full of incident, love, and humor. The author has long been known as a substantial figure in New York banking circles, and occupied a prominent position in politics during the Garfield-Arthur dynasty, his name being mixed with the Conkling imbroglio at the time the Empire State senators withdrew so dramatically from the United States Senate. Mr. Connery has given us a delightful romance, which will be read with pleasure by all those who desire to be entertained without the necessity of having some musty logic generated for the reformation of the world thrust down their unwilling throats. He writes to amuse, and certainly fulfils his mission to the Queen's taste."

"BLACK FRIDAY: A STORY OF LOVE AND SPECULATION, by Thos. B. Connery. When a man as prominent as Thos. B. Connery has shown himself in the financial world takes up the pen to write a romance of love and speculation under such a significant title as 'Black Friday,' we have a right to expect something out of the beaten track. Nor does the book bring disappointment. It is fresh and vigorous. The financier wields a trenchant pen. His pictures are excellent, and the love passages worthy of commendation. Some men excel in one field, but Mr. Connery bids fair to make a name for himself in literature as well as among the bulls and bears of Wall Street."

"THAT NOBLE MEXICAN, Mr. Connery's latest book, even excels the preceding volumes in interest and must add to his already enviable reputation."

Neely's Popular Library.

ALL THE DOG'S FAULT. Paper, 25 cents.

BLACK FRIDAY. Paper, 25 cents.

THAT NOBLE MEXICAN. Paper, 25 cents.

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen Street, London.

114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

A Journey to Venus.

By G. W. POPE.

Paper, 25c.

Neely's Popular Library with full page illustrations.

Lovers of Jules Verne will gladly welcome this remarkable volume. Many have declared that Dr. Pope has even outdone the French master at his own art. At any rate the narrative is written with an air of candor that almost compels a blind belief in its truth, although the adventures which befall the daring travelers to the glorious planet are staggering in the extreme. Books of this character, while written with a considerable latitude, contain many features of deepest interest, showing how far science has gone in its eager quest for the truth in relation with our neighboring planets, we may never know the truth with regard to Mars and Venus and Jupiter, but that is no reason we may not speculate and endeavor to lift the veil that hangs over those bright worlds that glow and sparkle in the heavens. "A Journey to Venus" is an extraordinary volume in many ways, and will well repay a careful perusal.

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen Street, London.

114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

The Passing of Alix.

By MRS. MARJORIE PAUL.

Neely's Popular Library—Paper, 25c.

Newspaper comment may in some minds count for little in settling the value of a novel, but it at least shows the drift of public opinion. Nothing but praise has been spoken of "The Passing of Alix." To show the general trend of this commendation we beg leave to publish a single literary notice from a prominent journal:

"A capital little book, that of Mrs. Marjorie Paul, just the light, breezy sort one delights in reading when swinging idly in a zephyr-tossed hammock in the early fall days, or before the crackling wood fire of the winter hearth of a country house. Doubtless many a copy will find its way into the satchel or handbag of tourist and commercial traveler, to whom the weighty novel, written with the evident intention of reforming this wicked and ignorant world, seldom appeals."

"It is a story of a sensational character, but clean in thought and pathetic in its conclusion. It is the story of a woman, and a good one. It contains nothing that is sensational, but is full of human interest, and holds the attention of the reader from start to finish. Besides telling the story, it teaches a lesson, but does not sermonize. It is a book, in fact, which will interest all, and furnishes the very best sort of light reading."

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen Street, London.

114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

MONTRESOR,

An English-American Love-Story.

By "LOOTA."

Neely's Prismatic Library.

Gilt top, 50c.

In "Montresor" we have a readable little volume, airily written, and dealing with the fancies of the heart. Our author introduces us to charming society, and we follow the fortunes of the heroine with more than passing interest. "Montresor" is hardly in the line of sensational novels, but one finds running through the story a most delightful vein of love, and the conclusion reached is so pleasant that we close the book with the sensation of having been very pleasantly entertained. The author's views upon divorce are in line with the ideas of those who have most seriously pondered upon this grave question. "Montresor" is a book that can be safely placed in the hands of the most exacting, which is more than can be said of most new novels.

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

26 Queen Street, London.

114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

THE KING IN YELLOW.

By

Robert W. Chambers.

Author of "In the Quarter."

Neely's Prismatic Library.

Gilt Top, 50 Cents.

This book has evidently created an astonishing amount of enthusiasm among the lovers of the weird and eccentric in literature. On all sides nothing but praise has been heard, coupling the gifted author's name with that of Edgar Allan Poe, and predicting a glorious future for the man whose pen has the magical power to charm the reading public, ever eager to seize on that which borders upon the *strange*. The odd and attractive cover appeals to the curiosity of the reader, and once he has dipped into the contents he finds a feast spread before him that awakens a desire for further intercourse with the same fertile pen.

EDWARD ELLIS:—"The author is a genius without a living equal, so far as I am aware, in his peculiar field. It is a masterpiece. . . . I have read many portions several times, captivated by the unapproachable tints of the painting. None but a genius of the highest order could do such work."

N. Y. COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER:—"The short prose tale should be a synthesis; it was the art of Edgar Poe, it is the art of Mr. Chambers. . . . His is beyond question a glorious heritage. . . . I fancy the book will create a sensation; . . . in any case it is the most notable contribution to literature which has come from an American publisher for many years; and fine as the accomplishment is, 'The King in Yellow' is large in promise. One has a right to expect a great deal from an author of this calibre."

TIMES HERALD:—"The most eccentric little volume of its (little) day 'The King in Yellow' is subtly fascinating, and compels attention for its style, and its wealth of strange, imaginative force."

NEW YORK TIMES:—"Mr. Robert W. Chambers does not have a system to work up to; he has no fad, save a tendency to write about the marvelous and the impossible; painting pictures of romance that have a wild inspiration about them. Descriptive powers of no mean quality are perceptible in this volume of stories."

THE N. Y. WORLD:—"Mr. Chambers has a great command of words; he is a good painter. His situations are most delicately touched, and some of his descriptions are exquisite. He writes like an artist. He uses colors rather than ideas. . . . The best drama in the volume means madness. The tenderest fancy is a sad mirage. . . . 'The King in Yellow' is a very interesting contribution to the present fund of matærio-mysticism. . . . To read Mr. Chambers' little book is to escape from the actual on poetical wings."

MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE:—"They have a mysterious eerie air about them that is apt to stimulate the reader's curiosity."

PHILADELPHIA TIMES:—"Charming, delicate, skilful, vivid."

PHILADELPHIA ITEM:—"Expected to make a sensation, charming, full of color and delicately tinted."

CLEVELAND GAZETTE:—"It is wondrous strong, dramatic, full of color, weird, uncanny, picturesque, and yet a gem of exquisite coloring, dreamy, symbolic, exciting."

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen Street, London.

114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Father Stafford.

By
ANTHONY HOPE.

The Most Remarkable of Mr. Hope's Stories.

Neely's Prismatic Library.

Gilt Top, 50 cents.

MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE :—"This story is in the genuine Hope style and for that reason will be widely read."

PUBLIC LEDGER, PHILADELPHIA :—" 'Father Stafford' is extremely clever and bold privateer venturing upon the high seas."

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE :—"It is a good story, the strong parts of which are the conflict between love and conscience on the part of a young Anglican priest. The charm of the book, however, lies in the briskness of the dialogue, which is as finely finished as any of Hope's novels."

NASHVILLE BANNER :—" 'Father Stafford' is a charming story. The whole book sustains the reputation that Anthony Hope has made, and adds another proof that as a portrayor of character of sharp distinctness and individuality he has no superior."

EVENING WISCONSIN :—"A writer of great merit. . . . Mr. Hope's work has a quality of straightforwardness that recommends it to readers who have grown tired of the loaded novel."

PHILLIPSBURGH JOURNAL :—"This is considered by his critics to be one of the strongest, most beautiful and interesting novels Mr. Hope has ever written. There is not a dull line in the entire volume."

VANITY, NEW YORK :—"A very interesting narrative, and Mr. Hope tells the story after that fashion which he would seem to have made peculiarly his own."

KANSAS CITY JOURNAL :—"There is something more than the romance of the action to hold the reader's mind. It is one of the author's best productions."

EVERY SATURDAY, ELGIN, ILL. :—"Anthony Hope is a master of dialogue, and to his art in this particular is due the enticing interest which leads the reader on from page to page."

HEBREW STANDARD :—"The strife between the obligation of a vow of celibacy and the promptings of true love, are vividly portrayed in this little book. . . . It contains an admirable description of English country life and is well written."

BOSTON DAILY GLOBE :—"It has enough of the charm of the author's thought and style to identify it as characteristic, and make it very pleasing."

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price. 

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

66 Queen Street, London.

114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Martha Washington Cook Book

A COMPENDIUM OF COOKERY
AND RELIABLE RECIPES.

Fully Illustrated.

315 Pages.

12mo. Oil Cloth Cover, - - - 50 Cts.

Paper, (Neely's Popular Library), 25 "

Over 1,000,000 copies of this popular and valuable book have been sold. A most comprehensive work, giving all the minute details pertaining to its subject. Contains hints and suggestions from the best housewives of our land. An indispensable adjunct to every culinary department.

The People's Reference Book.

999,999 FACTS OF USE
TO EVERYBODY.

Paper Cover.

Neely's Popular Library, 25c.

This is an invaluable book of ready reference, applicable to almost every possible industrial and domestic requirement. It gives information enabling one to meet everyday emergencies intelligently and promptly. Compiled from the best medical and other authorities. So indexed that any required item can be instantly found. No other similar book in the market to compare with it for efficiency and value.

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen Street, London.

114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Two Famous Authors.

To lovers of military tales and stories of romantic adventure
the world over the names of

CAPT. CHAS. KING, U.S.A.

AND

ST. GEORGE RATHORNE,

Author of "Dr. Jack,"

have indeed become household words. Their widely circulated novels may be found wherever the English language is spoken, and have served to while away the tedium of many a long railway journey or ocean voyage. The public seem to eagerly welcome each new story from these travelers who have searched the strangest corners of the earth for new scenes and remarkable exploits with which to entertain their legion of readers. Mr. F. Tennyson Neely has pleasure in announcing that the very latest and best productions of these wizard pens are now appearing in his attractive list of publications, and may be found on every book-stall here and abroad.

THE LATEST BOOKS by Capt. King.

WARRIOR GAP. Cloth, \$1.25.

FURT FRAYNE. Cloth, \$1.25; paper, 50c.

AN ARMY WIFE. Fully Illustrated. Cloth, \$1.25; paper, 50c.

A GARRISON TANGLE. Cloth, \$1.25; paper, 50c.

TRUMPETER FRED. Illustrated. Gilt top, 50c.

NOBLE BLOOD AND A WEST POINT PARALLEL. By Capt. KING and
ERNST VON WILDENBRUCH of the German Army. Gilt top, 50c.

THE MOST RECENT NOVELS by St. George Rathborne.

Author of "Doctor Jack."

Uniform Editions, Cloth, \$1.00; paper, 50c.

SQUIRE JOHN.

A SON OF MARS.

A BAR SINISTER.

A GODDESS OF AFRICA.

MASKED IN MYSTERY.

HER RESCUE FROM THE TURKS.

Others in preparation for early issue.

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen Street, London.

114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

RACHEL DENE.

By ROBERT BUCHANAN,

... Author of ...

"The Charlatan," "The Shadow of the Sword," "God and the Man."

Cloth, \$1.25 ; paper, 25c.

- Harrisburg Telegram** " 'Rachel Dene' is one of Robert Buchanan's best works."
Cincinnati Tribune " This is a good story."
Rocky Mountain News " 'Rachel Dene,' by Robert Buchanan is one of his best stories."
Record Union " Mr. Buchanan has not presented a stronger story. He prefaces it with the story of his life in literature, and gives the writers and ambitious youths some excellent advice."
Commercial Bulletin " An excellent story, full of strong points, both constructively and from a literary standpoint. It is practical. It deals with the dark and bright sides of life, but always to show the advantage of the bright side."
Nashville Christian Advocate " The book is clean and wholesome—enough of complexity in the plot to furnish the reader with occasional surprises."
Fullerton News " A very fascinating tale."
Western Christian Advocate " Fascinating, stimulating—a novel of love, murder, jealousy, false imprisonment, escape, and vindication."
Boston Ideas " Its elements are excellently characteristic—very likely due to its being an accurate picture for which commendation is due."
The American " Is fully equal, if not superior, to his former novels."
-

The Gates of Dawn.

By FERGUS HUME,

Author of "Mystery of a Hansom Cab," "Miss Mephistopheles," etc., etc.

Cloth, \$1.25; paper, 25c.

- Otis Library Bulletin** "A remarkably versatile and ingenious romance, replete with vivid descriptions and stirring incidents."
Nashville Banner "A well-arranged plot, and the interest of the story is well sustained."

Mr. Hume has built around a group of interesting characters a story of the old order of plot and counterplot, where there is mystery surrounding the heroine's birth—a wealthy man, in disguise, meets and loves her—a wicked female villain brings danger to the course of their true love—a good friend aids them in their hour of need, and all ends well. The people who make up this story are "A doctor addicted to opium, a pair of gypsies, a recluse lady, a lovely huntress, and a sporting parson," besides the hero, a lord of high degree, Pete, a fox terrier, and Simon, a horse. There is a mysterious hatching of plots among the gypsies, and much prophesying. The parson is a "simple, kindly old fellow, given to strong ale, terriers, and bluster." There is a great house with a witch, who holds nightly orgies in the empty rooms at midnight, from which come cries of tortured women and dying men, while by day this witch "tires her head, decks herself with gems, clothes herself in rich garments," and makes a mystery of herself generally. It is by far Fergus Hume's best book.

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen Street, London

114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Through Field and Fallow.

A Choice Collection of Original Poems.

By JEAN HOOPER PAGE.

CLOTH, GILT TOP, \$1.00.

IT IS NOT always the brilliant work which appeals to us most keenly. Sarcasm and rhetoric have their place, but the book that lies on the desk and is found in the mending-basket is the book, nine times out of ten, that deals with every-day life and sweeps across the strings of the heart. While Mrs. Page's work, "Through Field and Fallow," often touches the subtle minor chords, it invariably swells to the triumphant major and rings clear and true in the sweetness of undying hope and unquenchable faith.

Much of Mrs. Page's work has appeared first in our great daily newspapers, but its life has been less ephemeral than theirs. Here and there a woman has treasured some bit in her scrap book; a man has clipped a verse and put it away in the drawer of his desk marked "private." Sooner or later in this little volume the reader will find the poem that was written for him.

Father Ryan once wrote: "To uplift the downcast, to sweeten any life, to feel that we in some way have helped to lighten the great burden that rests upon mankind—this is the only real compensation that comes to the poet." This recompense will be Mrs. Page's.

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

6 Queen Street, London.

114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

SMOKING FLAX.

A Story of Dixie's Latest Problem.

By HALLIE ERMINIE RIVES.

Neely's Prismatic Library. Gilt top, 50 cents.

Stories of the South, dealing with its familiar types and lighter scenes, are of ordinary occurrence. Somber essays, descanting wisely upon its social problems are not rare. But seldom, indeed, has any writer succeeded in decking a sectional sermon in the garb of romance or of tragedy and sketching with the bold crayon of realistic circumstance, the trenchant lines of a condition against which theoretic logicians inveigh in vain. In "Smoking Flax" Miss Rives has done this—her story deals with that grave question of southern social economy, the lynching.

Miss Rives needs no introduction, since "A Fool in Spots" and numerous short stories gained for this beautiful daughter of Dixie a young popularity. She is a cousin of Amelia Rives, now the Princess Troubekoi, and has much of the poetic feeling which distinguished that vivid authoress. Her present book is a fierce arraignment of the northern societies which see in Judge Lynch only the lawless and unreasoning arbiter of a blind and passion-led mob. And yet the arraignment is before no court, and the briefs are all drawn up by the reader.

Upon the stern and rigid warp of brutal and bloody fact, Miss Rives, with the hand of a practised workman, and with a shuttle wound with the bright hues and odorous warmth of the south-land has woven a woof of romance, of woman's tenderest love and man's manliest devotion. The lights and shades are closely mingled, and through all the story, from its opening in the calm of peace and content, to its tragic close in the storm of death and bitterness and despair, the reader is held in an interest which grows steadily more real and more enravelling.

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen Street, London.

114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

LATE WORKS OF OPIE READ,

Author of

"A Kentucky Colonel."

Probably no American writer of to-day excels Opie Read in the delineation of strange characters. He loves to dwell upon Southern scenes, before and after the war, and so vividly are these quaint pictures drawn that the reader seems to see the characters of his story as plainly as though the skill of an artist had painted their portraits. "Odd Folks" will please all travelers who enjoy a good story, well told, and should meet with as heavy sale as "The Captain's Romance" has enjoyed. It is peculiarly fresh and sparkling, and a sure cure for loneliness or the blues. The remarkably clever pen-drawn characters will live through many editions as true types of American life.

ODD FOLKS. Cloth, \$1.00; paper, 25c.

THE CAPTAIN'S ROMANCE. Cloth, \$1.00; paper, 25c.

For sale everywhere, or sent post-paid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen Street, London.

114 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Neely's Imperial Library.

POPULAR AUTHORS,
BEST TITLES, FINEST BOOKS.

Illuminated Paper Covers and many Illustrations.

Entered as Second-Class Matter.

PRICE, 25 CENTS.

The Charlatan. Robert Buchanan and Henry Murray.

Burkett's Lock. M. G. McClelland.

The Land of Promise. (Illustrated.) Paul Bourget.

Hypnotism. (Illustrated.) Jules Claretie.

Facing the Flag. Jules Verne.

The Fallen Race. (Illustrated.) Austyn Granville.

The Disappearance of Mr. Derwent. Thomas Cobb.

Sacrificed Love. (Illustrated.) Alphonse Daudet.

The One Too Many. Mrs. E. Lynn Lynton.

The New Man at Rossmere. Mrs. J. H. Walworth.

At Market Value. Grant Allen.

A Daughter of the King. Allen.

A Monk of Cruta. (Illustrated.) E. Phillips Oppenheim.

The Gates of Dawn. Fergus Hume.

In Strange Company. (Illustrated.) Guy Boothby.

How Women Love. Max Nordau.

The Comedy of Sentiment. Max Nordau.

NEW TITLES WILL BE ADDED RAPIDLY.

For sale everywhere, or sent postpaid on receipt of price.

F. TENNYSON NEELY, Publisher,

96 Queen St., London.

114 Fifth Ave., New York.

